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ABSTRACT

This monograph contains papers from an institute on the theme of adult learning in the social environment. "Bill Moyers' Journal: An Interview with Myles Horton" provides excerpts from a televised interview that discusses Myles Horton's life, work, and association with the Highlander Folk School. "Myles Horton's Views on Learning in the Social Environment" contains Horton's comments on his view of learning and responses to questions from a group that viewed the edited tape of the Moyers interview. "Radical Pedagogy: Constructing an Arch of Social Dreaming and a Doorway to Hope" (Peter McLaren) is theoretical in nature and shares some perspectives on social context from the viewpoint of an educator working within the critical educational tradition. "Learning in the Social Environment: A Crow Perspective" (Janine Pease-Windy Boy) reflects on the process through which the Crow Indians integrated their culture into a modern educational institution, the Little Big Horn Community College located on the Crow reservation in Montana. "From an Adult Educator's Perspective" (Lloyd Korhonen, Chere Coggins Gibson) contains immediate reactions to the two preceding presentations. "The Arch of Social Dreaming: Teaching Radical Pedagogy Under the Sign of Postmodernity" (Peter McLaren) expands on McLaren's earlier paper. (YLB)

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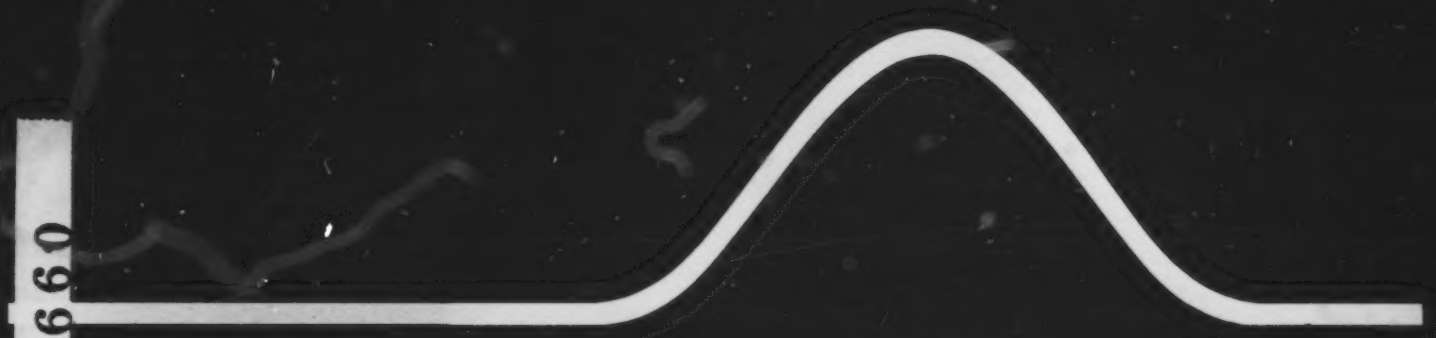

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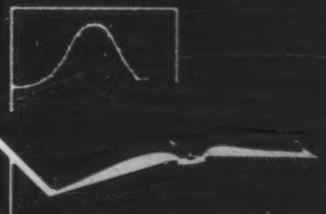

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Myles Horton
Big Sky, Montana
July 31, 1989

In my life, I set for myself a goal that I knew I would never be able to achieve....' fy goal was to work for world democracy--real democracy, not just make believe democracy -economic democracy, cultural democracy, as well as political democracy. There is still no place in the world where I have seen the kind of democracy I would like to see....Anything worth doing takes a lifetime to do....One of the jobs I enjoy most is to create little islands of decency, places for people to be human. You get enough of them, you know, and somehow they spread....I would like to judge myself not by what I have done but by what I have helped other people to learn to do. That would be my criteria of a successful life.

Social Environment and Adult Learning

Papers from an Institute Sponsored by
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Editors
Robert A. Fellenz
Gary J. Conti

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Foreword

A short time before he died Myles Horton spent a week in Montana with a group of adult education professors. He reminisced about his life and about what he had learned from people. Fifty-seven years of dedicated work at the Highlander Center constantly struggling to bring democracy to the world was a life that had brought him satisfaction, even though his great goal of democracy for all remained a hope for the future. It is better, he said, to build toward a future ideal for human living than to be side-tracked by more attainable but less meaningful goals. It was this enthusiasm, this trust in people that marked so many aspects his life as a great adult educator.

Horton confessed that when he first started the Highlander Center he had to "go back to school with the people and learn from them." Schooling had given him many answers to problems that people didn't have but no answers to problems they did have. "So we started learning how people react; we learned from them, how they learned." This lesson of learning from the people was a lesson well learned for it remained one of the dominant characteristics of the Highlander Center. People gathered there not to be given answers to their problems but to share their insights and to learn together how to bring freedom and justice to the people of their communities. This "circle of learners" approach, as Myles liked to call it, also necessitated a re-examination of the role of the teacher. "I always thought my role was to pose questions and help people examine what they already knew. By questions, you help people to know what they already know but don't know they know."

The occasion of Myles Horton's visit to Montana was the third annual summer institute for adult educators sponsored by the Kellogg Center for Adult Learning Research. The Center, the summer institute, and this publication were all funded through a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, an organization gratefully acknowledge for its long-term support of continuing education. The theme of the 1989 Institute was "Adult Learning in the Social Environment." A growing realization of the major emphasis given to the effect of cognitive psychology on adult learning and the concomitant neglect of the impact of the social environment on learning led institute organizers to invite Myles Horton, Peter McLaren, and Janine Pease-Windy Boy to address the assembled adult educators. The purpose of this monograph is to present the thoughts and suggestions of these individuals to the field of adult education with the hope that they will inspire greater attention to the impact of the social environment on adult learning.

Peter McLaren describes himself as a critical pedagogist whose message "represents an approach to schooling that is committed to the imperatives of empowering students and transforming the larger social order in the interests of justice and equality" (McLaren, 1989, *Life in Schools*, Preface). He is Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at the School of Education for Allied Professions, Miami University of Ohio. Peter is also Associate Director, with Henry Giroux, of the Center for Education and Cultural Studies at Miami University. His two papers are theoretical in nature and share some perspectives on social context from the viewpoint of an educator working within the critical educational tradition.

Janine Pease-Windy Boy is President of Little Big Horn Community College located on the reservation of the Crow Indians of Montana. Such tribally controlled colleges have the two-fold mission of preserving their Native American cultures and of providing modern educational opportunities for members of their tribes. Janine's reflections on the process the Crow Indians went through to integrate their culture into a modern educational institution provide exceptional insight into this process of integrating culture into educa-

tion. Her paper also causes one to re-examine how accepted standards of a dominant society can interfere with the learning of those belonging to minority groups.

The reactions of two participants in the institute are also included. Lloyd Korhonen and Chere Coggins Gibson, professors of adult education at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Wisconsin respectively, shared their immediate reactions to the McLaren and Windy Boy presentations and thus initiated several days of in-depth discussions among participants regarding various aspects of learning and the social environment.

While this brief publication presents some insights into adult learning in the social environment, our hope is, as Myles Horton would say, that it will raise more questions than it provides answers. How does the social environment affect the way adults perceive the world, solve problems, remember the past, interpret their experiences, or hope in the future? How do interpersonal relationships change learning processes? What aspects of our culture most dominate our visions of truth, of goodness, or of reality? How do we integrate critical theory with the issues and problems of real-life learning? How do we, as educators, compete with today's "image makers"? How is adult education a social reform movement? Or the Myles Horton challenge: How do we bring real democracy--cultural democracy, economic democracy, as well as political democracy to all people?

Such questions are complex, and their answers may well call for radical changes in educational structures. But the challenge of understanding the effect of the social environment on learning and of helping others benefit from this knowledge is a challenge that has been faced by other adult educators. In reflecting on a lifetime of struggling with such issues, Myles Horton concluded: "I feel that I would like to judge myself not by what I have done but by what I have helped other people to learn to do. That would be my criteria of a successful life."

Robert A. Fellenz
Gary J. Conti

Bill Moyers' Journal: An Interview with Myles Horton

Bill Moyers

The following are excerpts from an interview of Myles Horton by Bill Moyers. The entire two-part interview was aired on PBS on June 5 and June 11, 1981, under the title of *The Adventures of a Radical Hillbilly: An Interview with Myles Horton*. It is reproduced here with the gracious permission of Bill Moyers and the *Appalachian Journal*. The full text of the interview can be found in Volume 9, Number 4 of the 1983 issue of the *Appalachian Journal*.

This edited version of the interview was shown to the participants at the 1989 Kellogg Summer Institute. Following this 30-minute video, Myles Horton made comments and responded to questions from the participants at the institute. Those remarks are in the following chapter.

(The broadcasted interview opens with the following comments by Bill Moyers.) Few people I know have seen as much change in the American South, or helped to bring it about, as Myles Horton. He's been beaten up, locked up, put upon, and railed against by racists, toughs, demagogues, and governors. But for almost 50 years now, he has gone on with his special kind of teaching-- helping people to discover within themselves the courage and ability to confront reality and change it. Myles Horton came to his mission from a childhood among the mountain people of Appalachia, a land rich in beauty but a colony of poverty. "Nothing will change," said Horton to himself, "until we change-- until we throw off our dependence and act for ourselves." So in 1932, in the mountains west of Chattanooga, in one of America's poorest counties, Myles Horton founded the Highlander Folk School, dedicated to the belief that poor working-class people-- adults--could learn to take charge of their lives and circumstance. At first he ran workshops to train organizers for the CIO. Jim Crow laws forbade integration, but Horton invited blacks and whites alike, and Highlander become one of the few places in the South where the two races could meet under the same roof. In the early 1950's, Horton turned the emphasis of his workshops from union organizing to civil rights. Highlander was now principal gathering place of the moving forces of the black revolution. Martin Luther King came; so did Rosa Parks, Andrew Young, Julian Bond, Stokely Carmichael, and scores of unsung foot soldiers in the long march of Southern blacks toward equality. The state tried to close it down; the Klan harassed it; state troopers raided it. But Highlander seemed indestructible, and so did Myles Horton. He's 75 now, and his school, from which he has stepped aside as leader in favor of younger colleagues, is preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year. I thought it a good time to pay a visit to Myles Horton at Highlander, now located on a farm near Knoxville.

Moyers: Myles, you've upset a lot of people down here over the years. *The Mill Owner* said that Highlander was about the boldest, the most insulting thing in an Anglo-Saxon South that has yet been done; one Georgia governor said that you were a cancerous group spreading throughout the South; the state of Tennessee closed you down, confiscated your property, sold it at auction; the Ku Klux Klan beat up your staff and burned your buildings; a United States senator had you ejected from his hearings. Now what's a nice man like you doing upsetting all those people?

Horton: Well, I don't try to upset people. I try to help people grow and be creative, and fulfill themselves as people. And in the process of doing that, they upset a lot of people.

Moyers: What do you mean?

Horton: Well, they start doing things, asserting their rights, for example, working people asserting their rights to have a union, asserting their rights to be treated decently, people in the mountains assert their rights to

be left alone to live their own way if they want to without having the absentee landowners run them out of their holdings, their heritage. And we try to help people, you know, stand up against this kind of thing. We try to help people become empowered so they themselves can do things, and that's very irritating. One of the reasons they confiscated Highlander was because the charge was made by the governor of Georgia that this cancerous growth was spreading over the South and that the civil rights movement came out of Highlander. And only a, you know, only a racist white person could make that assumption that some white people had to be doing that kind of thing. So they assumed that since a lot of the black had been at Highlander long before the civil rights movement and during the civil rights movement--blacks couldn't do anything themselves, so it had to be some white people. So they got four or five of the governors together and closed Highlander. And it was only after they closed it they found out that they, you know, didn't have anything with the Civil Rights movement, but the blacks were doing the civil rights movement.

Moyers: I think that's what really upset a lot of people.

Horton: And they got upset, I think, when they found out they couldn't--they couldn't stop it by confiscating Highlander. When they first came, they came and padlocked the building, and some of the news reporters that were there, said "What are you laughing about?" I was standing outside laughing, and they took a picture of me standing there laughing. And the sheriff padlocked the building. I said, "My friend here, you know, he thinks he's padlocking Highlander," and, but I said, you know, "Highlander is an idea--you can't padlock an idea."

Moyers: You say Highlander is an idea. What's the idea?

Horton: Well, we have a philosophy, that we know, that we can identify. We believe that--we believe in people. Our loyalty is to people, not institutions, structures. And we try to translate that belief and trust in people's ability to learn into facilitating peoples' learning. Now you don't teach people things, since they're adults; you help them learn. And insofar as you learn how people learn, you can help. And that's a powerful dynamic force, when you realize that people themselves in these hollows, and these factories and these mines, you know, can take much more control of their lives than they themselves realize.

Moyers: How does it work, I mean, how do you teach--how do you help people learn something like that?

Horton: Well, first thing you have to clarify is that--you have to understand, you have to know that people--working people, common people, the uncommon common people--they're the most uncommon people in the world, the common people-have mainly a past, they're adults. Unlike children in the regular school system, who have practically no past and are told by the schools that their present isn't worth anything, are taught, you know, they are taught about the future, they're prepared for the future. Adults are--come out of the past with their experiences. So you run a program at Highlander based on their experiences, their experiences in learning--from which they may not have learned very much, because they haven't learned how to analyze it, but it's there, and the grist for the mill is there. And our job is to help them understand that they can analyze their experiences and build on those experiences, and maybe transform those experiences, even. Then they have a power that they're comfortable with. See people--first I should tell you that not only are people adults with a past, with experiences, but they are leaders in their communities. I don't mean official leaders, but grass-roots leaders.

Moyers: You mean, not bankers and--

Horton: No, they are the people in the people's organizations, like labor unions or community organizations of various kinds. Well, those people come and we say, "Okay, what are your experiences that related to this topic--not all your experiences, but your experiences that relate to this topic?" Now they hadn't considered those experiences too important--they hadn't thought of them being very important. We say, this is very important because that's the curriculum, that's the build-

ing stones that we're going to use here. And it's something you can take back with you because you, you know, you brought it here. So we start out--

Moyers: They didn't know it, when they got there.

Horton: They don't--they hadn't learned to analyze those experiences so they could learn from them. You know, people say you learn from experiences--you only learn from experiences that you learn from, you know. That's not all experiences. And we try to help them learn from their experiences in such a way that when they go back they'll continue to learn. But we have to also learn from our experiences. And one of the things we have to do in addition to what they have to do, is to learn how to relate our experiences to theirs. And you do that by analogy, you know, you do it by storytelling. You don't get up and say, "Look here are some facts we want to dump on you." We say, "Well, you might consider this. Now this happened to somebody kind of like you in a different situation." So we get them doing the same thing with each other. You get peer teaching going, where everybody that's in the circle is part of a peer teaching group.

Moyers: What's radical about that? What was radical about that back in 1930?

Horton: Well, it's terribly radical, because education, it goes against what education is supposed--Education is supposed to prepare people to live in whatever system the educational school system is about. Like in our system it's to prepare people to live under capitalism and be--you know, fit into that system. In the Soviet Union, it's to prepare people to live in that system, and fit in that system. And that's what education, official education is all about, to prepare people to fit into the system, and support the system.

Moyers: And Highlander?

Horton: And turn them--really, it's to turn them into nuts and bolts to keep the system together, you see, whatever kind of system it is. Highlander says, No. You can't use people that way. People are, you know, creative, you've got to allow them to do a lot of things that don't fit any kind of systems, and you've got to have a lot of deviations, to have a lot of pluralism. We believe in people keeping a lot of their old customs, and adding new ones. And we said, that's what enriches life. So we're going to focus on that, and there's a lot of dynamics and a lot of power in that, that scares people. When people in the South, before the civil rights were started, began to feel that they could do something, in spite of the laws, in spite of tradition, and started doing it, then you know, all hell broke loose. We had that experience earlier, in the '30's. We started back in the Depression, in the pre-industrial union movement in this country, before the CIO was started. And many of our students who had been at Highlander before, you know, became leaders in the unions in the early days when it was rough. When we first started organizing it was illegal to have a picket line, and a lot of our activities were illegal. Highlander itself was illegal up until about four years ago. We defied the state law on segregation in public--in private schools, which stayed on the books long after the public schools were integrated. You know, we had to work that way to live up to our principles. So, to get off the subject a little bit, but the people have all this power, but it's suppressed by the public school system and by the institutions. We, having loyalty to the people and not the institutions, you know, always try to throw our weight on the side of the people, and help them do things that are right. Now you can't get people to do something they think is wrong. You know, you can't--you know, people say Highlander is a propaganda nest, you get all these ideas in people's heads and they go out and do things they learned at Highlander, well, you know, that's not the way things are.

Moyers: They were in their minds.

Horton: They were in their minds, they're seeds. What you do, you develop those seeds. They're crusted over, you know, with all kinds of things and the people don't even know they're there. We know they're there, we dig for them, and we cultivate those seeds. We help prepare the ground for them to grow, and we help people learn, they can learn from each other, that they're stronger. In-

dividualism is enhanced by being part of a group, you know, individuality, I guess, would be a better way of saying it, is enhanced by being part of a group, instead of telling people they should go it alone, they should be competitive, they should, you know, compete with their fellow man. We say, work together, and you'll be a better person.

Moyers: Look, Myles, if everyone made a private heresy out of challenging the system, how would society function?

Horton: I believe in laws, but I know that the only way that laws can have any meaning, they have to be just laws. For just laws to have a meaning, and to have a society of laws, you've got to challenge unjust laws. This concept was provided for by an amendment to the Constitution, you know, our trials were you can appeal--this is not as kind of outside reality as it seems to people.

Moyers: You think that's what Jefferson might have meant when he said that every generation ought to entertain the possibility of its own revolution?

Horton: That's right, that's right. I've quoted that many times, I've said, you know, I started out I thought there ought to be a revolution in this country, I mean a revolution that, you know, is run democratically, because I believe in democracy--we don't have it, and none of the countries that I know of and I know practically all of them--

Moyers: We don't have it? We hear all these salutes to democracy on Inaugural Day and--

Horton: No, we don't have it. We have some trimmings of democracy. We have some of--like the parliament electoral system, which might have worked in the early days when you had a handful of people, but, you know, people don't have anything to say about the people they elect today, you know that. That's why only a small percentage of people vote. They know that the timing is set up--it's so--too far away from them. We have to really examine all of our structures in this country, to make them more democratic. You can't have democracy in the workplace, when the system is run for the benefit or the profit of somebody instead of for the benefit of all the people. You know, so we can't have economic democracy under a profit taking system, we can't have political democracy when we don't have some kind of decentralization that brings government closer to the people. That sounds like Reagan, you know, but you do have to have--you do have to break the system down to where people could have more say about their own lives. I mean, that's efficient, that's more creative. I believe in a kind of pluralistic sort of society. We've never--no country, no system has to my mind, you know, thought too seriously about how you do this, and I think it's one of the things we ought to be about in this country.

Moyers: But tell me specifically, Myles, what did you do to these workers when they came here in the early days?

Horton: Okay. In the first place, you had to have their confidence, because by helping them with their problems, like I said earlier, you had to learn from people, you had to start where they were and deal with their problems. And we say, "Look. Who's been telling you what to do--teachers, preachers, politicians--and did it work? Was it good advice, did it work for you? I don't know, but you wouldn't be here, if that worked. Because you've had plenty of people telling you what to do. So we're not going to do that, we're not going to compound that. We're going to try something else--we're going to try to build on what you know, and your experiences, and help you understand that your neighbors have some experiences, and that other people in another place, maybe in another country, have some experiences that relate to this problem. All of that are related, died in with your experiences. I remember one fellow that came from over here in the mountains, up near the North Carolina line. He said, "When I came here, I had one little piece of pie that had all the answers. Pie has all of the answers," he said, "I had a little slice of that pie. And Joe here, he had a little slice, somebody else had a slice, and he contributed to that slice. So now we got the whole pie and now I know everything, I got the whole pie, and I'm going to take the whole pie back home instead of my little slice." Well, he was proud of the fact

that he contributed a slice, you know, he didn't then just learn from other people. Well that's what happens.

Moyers: You didn't--

Horton: But in addition to getting that information, you got to get motivation. And motivation comes from within, not from outside in something, you don't motivate somebody, you help them to learn to motivate themselves. So what you do is try to get people to have more confidence in themselves and their peers, and to understand it's up to them, there's nobody else can do it.

Moyers: Was it a coincidence that the trigger of all this, Rosa Parks on the bus, happened two months after she was at Highlander? Was that just a coincidence?

Horton: No, not according to Rosa. Now I never tried to tell what happened at Highlander, just let the people it happens to, tell. Rosa said that the connection between those two things was that at Highlander it was the first time in her life she had met white people she could trust, fully trust. And what Rosa--Rosa had known some wonderful white people who were full of social equality and--but, what she was saying was she had never been in a place where you could demonstrate by everything that happened that you believe in full social equality. You know, that Highlander was--anywhere you went, you know, it was--everybody was equal. There was no, you know, that was no way--I always said we were too small and too poor to discriminate. We didn't have any facilities for discrimination. There was no way we could have done it if we wanted to, you know. So you know, Rosa just saw a total way of living she'd never seen before, she just couldn't believe that would, you know, happen. She didn't go back with any plans or anything, she went back with a different spirit.

Horton: One of the ideas that we had at the beginning of Highlander was that we had to use cultural activities as part of the program, because people need not just intellectual discussion, or even--

Moyers: Politics--

Horton: Action--learning from action and doing it, but they also need something to, you know, to cultivate the spirit and soul. And it's obvious that drama and dance and music and things like that would contribute--and art, different kinds. Well, we were really fortunate in that when Zilphia, my wife, came to Highlander, she was a trained musician, from Arkansas, and, you know, had a background of--a miner's background, her father was a coal miner. But she also had, you know, musical training. But the musical training, but, you know, was a classical kind you get in a--you know, going to college and so on. So she--but she soon, you know, started singing labor songs and folk songs and learned to play the guitar and accordion--she played the piano--and used her music to help fit into the program. The same time she was doing it, she was a good teacher. She was a very good teacher, like in training shop stewards on how to take up grievances, and the Highlander way of doing it, not just technically, but in rallying the people behind you. And she'd use drama as part of her way of teaching, so she developed a drama program along with the music program. So she had two kinds of programs going.

Moyers: Do you remember that song that John Hancock of the tenant farmers taught Zilphia? Called "No More Mournin'?"

Horton: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that's a beautiful song. I was teaching in a school for sharecroppers, tenant farmers out in Little Rock, Arkansas, in a school that Claude Williams ran. And the police were, you know, harassing us, because had some whites and blacks together there. And every time the police would come, why, I would sit down in the audience like a white person being entertained, and the blacks would start leading singing. And John Hancock was the--become the star, because he could always make up songs if we'd run out of songs. And that's the part--I brought that back to Zilphia, I collected that.

Moyers: Do you remember that song?

Horton: Yeah, I can't remember the words, now, but I remember the--

Moyers: No more mourning/No more mourning/No more mourning after awhile/And before--

Horton: Before I'll be a slave/I'll be buried in my grave/And go home--

Moyers: Leadbelly was here, too, wasn't he? He wrote a song that was going to be used to raise money for Highlander, that became a classic.

Horton: Yeah.

Moyers: You remember that one?

Horton: Yeah, Leadbelly was never at Highlander. He always wanted to come to Highlander, but he did three or four benefit concerts for Highlander.

Moyers: But he did write that song.

Horton: Oh yeah, he did a lot of songs, a lot of music. Zilphia used to play with him, they'd play together. He said she's the only white woman could play, you know, black music, that he ever saw. And he'd get her to play with him any time she was around. She'd get on the piano and play with him.

Moyers: "Bourgeois Blues" was--

Horton: And she'd--he'd sung the--We were at a party, a fund raising party, in New York, and--well, that was back when we had respectable sort of sponsors like Mrs. Roosevelt and all the big people in--

Moyers: Eleanor Roosevelt?

Horton: Eleanor Roosevelt. Well, she was at Highlander twice; she was a great supporter of Highlander. But at that time she helped us, used her influence to get a name--a bunch of name people together there, and Leadbelly was the performer at that place. And when we were getting ready to put on a program, Zilphia and Leadbelly were back playing backstage--playing, just having fun, and he said he wanted to try this song out on her. He'd just been working on it, but he tried to get it done for that occasion, he wanted to use it for that occasion, but he hadn't finished it. And- -so she liked it so well, she said go ahead and use it anyway. She persuaded him to sing it even though he wasn't quite satisfied with it. So that was the beginning of "Bourgeois Blues"--that was the first time it was ever sung.

Moyers: There is a story that a couple of striking tobacco workers from Charleston, South Carolina, brought your wife Zilphia a song which she and Pete Seeger then turned into what has become one of the most famous hymns of the civil rights movement, "We Shall Overcome." Is that a true story?

Horton: Well, it's almost. There was a strike of tobacco workers, working in the tobacco plant in Charleston, South Carolina, and we always encouraged students to bring songs that they had written or used on a picket line, and just like Guy (Carawan) does today, we still do the same thing here now. And that song was a kind of rough-hewn song that they'd gotten from a black hymnal; the blacks had sung it, and the white people had picked it up--they had tried to make a strike song out of it. And it was a song that Zilphia said it wasn't singable, it was too hard to sing. So she sat down at the piano like she always did with people like that, and they worked out the music so it'd be simpler. She used to say there was singable songs, and then there was songs like "The Star-Spangled Banner," which nobody should sing. You know, she thought songs should be easy to sing. So that was revised, and that became a very popular song that week. People liked it after they had simplified it a little bit.

For ten years it was just a Highlander song, and then the labor movement started using it a little bit more, and then it died down, and just kind of stayed in the Highlander domain. And then Guy Carawan, who is in charge of music here now, taught that song, which is a black peoples' song, to a lot of his people in SNCC, and later on did it for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and it kind of--the song came back to the people where it originated from, and then it became a popular song again in the civil rights movement, and now as you know it's sung around the world. It's everywhere.

Moyers: How do you assess its impact on our times?

Horton: Oh Lord, it's no--there's no one song that I know of that is still, you know, you see the Irish scrapping, you see people in Chile, they use it in Chile, it was used in Cuba, it's used in, it's sung in China, all the schools sing it in China--it's used everywhere. I don't know of any song of that kind that is so widespread.

Moyers: Well, it symbolized, didn't it, your own transformation from the union movement to civil rights?

Horton: Yeah. Some people tried to describe Highlander, they said Highlander was just a series of different schools, you know, it was a community school, we were poverty, you know, a depression school, we were an industrial union school, a CIO school, we were a farmer labor school, we were a civil rights school, we were Appalachian--that's one way to describe it, because you have to, you know, break things up to describe them. But to me, it's very inaccurate. Highlander has just been one school all the way through, we were just doing the same thing with different groups of people. We try to empower people. We're using these different periods of interest in the South to--as a means of educating people to take more control of their own lives. And although the subject matter differs, the approach differs, the purpose is the same. We use the same methods that I described earlier, and the same purpose--the purpose is to help people become so empowered that they can begin to have something to do with their lives. And you can't do it with large numbers of people.

Moyers: Is that why you've stayed small and--

Horton: Yeah. Well, see, the reason is--I knew that intellectually, and I said Highlander is--I never want to be big, because I always want to deal with 20 or 30 people at a time, because that seems to be the maximum you can deal with effectively. And I don't want to have a lot of branches, I just want to be small. And whatever influence you have, developing people with a multiplication influence. They multiply, that's where you get your, you know, your two cents' worth--you multiply people, you deal with leaders who multiply themselves. Then you have an outreach. You don't do mass education, so you don't need to deal with a lot of people at a time, because that's not the way you get your Brownie points built up. It's how many people are influenced. That's done best by taking the people who can multiply themselves.

Moyers: I'll tell you something that in looking back over your life, has helped me. And it's what you discovered about how much conflict is in the lives of poor people, and how often only conflict is the way the way they can resolve their problems. You know, well-educated middle--

Horton: That's a very hard thing to explain to my nonviolent, pacifist friends. They say, you know, of course you'd always advise against violence. And I say, no, I said, Highlander--the people that Highlander deals with live a life of violence, and this violence takes a lot of forms. Not just the physical violence, but the violence of starvation, the violence of depriving people of education, the violence of being--you know, of oppression of various kinds. All those are forms of violence. So you'd have to choose a lesser violence always, never between--Our choice at Highlander was seldom between violence and nonviolence--it was between the lesser forms of violence. We had a discussion some of us, some young people that came down from the East during the big summer in Mississippi, you know, in--when was it, '64, '65?

Moyers: '64

Horton: '64. And we were down at Greenwood, Mississippi, and they were talking about, maybe we'd better talk to the police, maybe--after all, they're not all bad, and we, some of us could talk to the police. And I remember these kids were just a bunch of them from Yale, just had come down. And they w\ere going to talk to the policy. So one of these black guys, said, no, no, no. And finally this white guy said to this guy, "Why is it that you don't want to talk to the police?" He says, "When they sees this black head, they hits it." Now, see that's what blacks have known all the time, and people don't know. They just hit them because they're black. Kill them, because they're black.

Moyers: But the point I want to get at, because I think it's essential to you, is that when middle-class, upper-class, well-intentioned, liberal people rule out conflict as a way of poor people solving their problems, they leave those poor people powerless, don't they?

Horton: No, they support the status quo. What they're doing is reinforcing the situa-

tion, firming up the situation as it is, and not allowing for any change, and the condition of those people will get worse. It'll continue to get worse, because if you don't struggle against oppression, oppression moves in on you. So what they're doing, they're accelerating the rate of oppression on people by not understanding it has to be a struggle. A struggle is not only, in my point of view, the moral thing to do, but it's a great learning experience. People--the greatest education comes from action, and the greatest action is struggle for justice. So if you deny people the opportunity to become empowered and educated, deny people the right to be free, you know, to be people, and they all do it in the name of law and order.

Moyers: You do know fear?

Horton: Oh yes, I know fear. You didn't survive--I wouldn't have been here today if I didn't know fear. If you don't know fear, it's just like having the sense of touch, so when you burn your finger, you know, it hurts. If you didn't have that, you'd burn your finger off. You know, you wouldn't--or you put your hand in the buzz saw, you wouldn't know it but you'd be looking off when you cut it off. If you don't know fear, in this kind of business, when you're playing on the cutting edge of social change, and conflict situations, where there--you know, where the sides are lined up, and there's violence all the time, you better learn to know it.

Moyers: Well, given. that reality, why did you think that a bunch of teachers at a seclusive place like this could identify with men in circumstances as painful as those?

Horton: Okay, now, I believe that it had to be done. And I was determined to try to do it. And I was determined to identify, to be--have these people perceive that I had solidarity with them. I knew that had to be.

Moyers: Here you were Union Theological Seminary, Chicago University--

Horton: A year ago up in West Virginia they got to arguing about people who had come down, these experts would come in from these universities, and somebody says, "Well, you know, your friend Myles Horton is one of them." "The hell he is," he says, "he's never been to school. We know him." You know?

Moyers: (laughs) But why did you think--

Horton: So I knew it was a handicap, but I thought I could overcome it somehow.

Myles Horton's Views on Learning in the Social Environment

Myles Horton

At the 1989 Kellogg Summer Institute on Learning in the Social Environment, the participants watched a 30-minute excerpt from *The Adventures of a Radical Hillbilly: An Interview with Myles Horton* by Bill Moyers. Following this viewing, Myles Horton commented on his view of learning and responded to the following questions from the group.

Horton's Comments

The *Appalachian Journal of Aging and Knowledge* wanted to publish an article on my work at Highlander. They asked for 50 pictures of me, and I said that was all right providing they put in one picture that I selected. The picture I sensibly put in was a picture of me sleeping in front of the capitol in Washington during the poor people's campaign. I called it a portrait of Horton in action.

Some people have seen me limping around here. My leg turns to well-cooked spaghetti once in a while when I'm walking around. It hasn't always been that way. In fact, I am having a hard time practicing what I have been preaching all my life in terms of the interdependence of people. I'm having a hard time justifying the fact that I am having problems. Recently while in Nicaragua, we were going down to demonstrate in front of the American Embassy. Someone said "Don't you want to get a cab?" I said, "No, I want to walk along so I can greet the people. I can get there all right." My friend said, "Yes, but you seem to have a problem with your knee." It looks like I am dying from the bottom up. If I had a choice, I would rather die from the bottom up than the top down. I would rather know where I am going and not be able to get there, than be able to get there and not know where I am going.

In my life, I set for myself a goal that I knew I would never be able to achieve. I don't think limited goals are really helpful. They can be a step toward your goals, and steps are wonderful to tell whether you are making progress or not. But they can also make it seem that our goal is something that is always getting further and further away. My goal was to work for world democracy--real democracy, not just make believe democracy--economic democracy, cultural democracy, as well as political democracy. There is still no place in the world where I have seen the kind of democracy I would like to see. I suppose if I had the opportunity to see some of the things I dream of today, they wouldn't look too good. I would want to see something beyond that. It is like climbing a mountain. When you get to the top of the mountain, you see a bigger mountain and go on. I think that is great to have that kind of goals. My goal is for democracy. I am not disappointed that I have not been able to see a world of democracy.

Another thought I had was that anything worth doing takes a lifetime to do. Goals shorter than that you should not get too involved in. Any kind of limited reform, it seems to me, would reinforce the system, rather than change it. That's just structural reform, and that does not change things. I am not unhappy about my life journey because I believe that you build a future as you go along; what you do today is a building block for the future. The future is not something that you have later on; it is something that you build now. The way you do things today determines the future you will have. I am a revolutionary in my philosophy. I think when you accomplish something now, it builds for the future. That is a revolutionary act. I am very content to do things that are important today provided they are building in the right direction--in a democratic direction. At one time I said one of the jobs I enjoy most is to create little islands of decency, places for people to be human. You get enough of them, you know, and somehow they spread. Any kind of education that doesn't multiply itself and doesn't spread is no good because you have to have masses of people to bring about

change. You have to have the majority of the people who really know what they are into in order to bring about fundamental change. So you have to have an educational program where one of the components is the multiplication of what you do. Then hopefully there will be a law of decency, and you won't have to appeal to laws.

You can build more yourself if you get other people to help you, even though it takes more time than doing it yourself. It may be easier to do it yourself, but it is more important to get other people involved. I feel that I would like to judge myself not by what I have done but by what I have helped other people to learn to do. That would be my criteria of a successful life.

The other thing that I would like to talk about is what we call a circle of learners. Those of you who are intrigued with American Indians know where we got that idea. We were accused one time of having a communist school because we didn't have a desk or podium for a speaker; we sat around and talked and didn't have text books. Our text books were the curriculum the people brought with them. But some couldn't understand that; it didn't fit their definition of a school. That didn't bother us, but we did care about our status as a tax-exempt institution. So they kept bringing up the idea of this circle being a Red invention. I went along with them. I said, "Yes, you are right there." I just let them talk to build up to that point. Finally I said, "Well we got this idea from the Native Reds in our country, not from Russia." Our Native American Indians had the idea long ago that groups had to do things, not individuals. They had an educational process where groups were involved in the learning process. So I want to give them credit for that idea. (If I gave credit for all my ideas, it would take all day.)

I don't think there are many new ideas but only adaptations of ideas. I am hoping that as we talk a little bit about Highlander some of you might feel that you could adapt some of these ideas. Others feel you would probably like to but can't get by with it. That is all right with me. I have to make decisions of what I am going to do; I share with you what I learned, and you make decisions of whether you want to do anything with it or not. That is your choice.

Another question was raised about roles of the educator. That is something I had to do a lot of thinking about. If I were to be a part of this circle, what is my role? Am I going to be like everybody else, or am I going to be like everybody in some ways and different in other ways? This is how I figured out what I was going to do. If people don't think of me as being in solidarity with them, then I am not going to have any influence with them. I will be an outsider trying to tell them what to do. If I am to identify with them, I have to contribute on the same basis as everybody else; that is, staying within the sphere of knowledge of the people. This can extend rapidly in this process, but you can't break that chain from their experience to what you are talking about. If you are aware of that and stay within those parameters, you can talk just like anyone else in the group. They can take what you say or leave what you say, just like they take or leave what anyone else has to say. You have to participate because if you just sit there you are saying that you are not like them.

You also have another role that has to be exercised with care. I always thought my role was to pose questions and help people examine what they already knew. By questions, you help people to know what they already know but don't know they know. Admittedly, I had a wider range of knowledge than any other one person, though not than the total group. I knew a lot of things going on in the region, and they only knew their area. So my job sometimes, in addition to posing questions and getting them to examine contradictions, was to tell them about other people that they didn't know and to relate things I knew but they didn't have any way of knowing. You have the responsibility to share that part of your knowledge with them too. That is how I resolved my role, and I found if I followed it carefully, I never had any problems. The big thing is to stay within the limits of their expanding experience. What they were doing at

Highlander was their experience too, and it had to be examined as they went along just like any other experience.

People got ready to leave Highlander and tried to figure out what they had learned from each other as part of a group. They then realized they had to go back to different situations. There was no effort to try to get any agreement on what to do and how to do it; everybody had to take what they could use, just as you do here. But we had everybody make a summary of what they thought they would do when they went back. I mean right the next day they were back doing things because they had evolved into leaders. So they made a statement about what they would do and had the advantage of the evaluation of other people right there to discuss their plans. This peer evaluation became a commitment. I would tell them, "If you think you are safe and go home and goof off after you said you were going to do this, all these people are going to find out about it." It is a good way to make people remember what they said they were going to do and to take responsibility for doing it. That is another part of that circle of learning.

That is not the only thing we do at Highlander to try helping people. For example, the miners in our region finally got strongly organized to protest black lung. We had been working with them. We did not play a major role, but we knew all the leaders. After they got pretty well established, the textile workers in the Carolina's found they had a similar problem in the textile mills. They called it brown lung. They wanted to organize and asked us if we would help them. When we said yes, they thought we would tell them how to do it. Well we did, but in a way they didn't expect. We brought in the people from the black lung association--some of the victims, the doctors who pioneered the treatment, and the president of the black lung association--and they were the teachers. They shared with the people what they had learned. They spoke of the political problems they had, problems with the medical association, and so on. They learned from peers or as close to peers as you can get. It was peer learning they learned from those who they identified with and who had not forgotten how they learned. It worked. They went back and within a year they were organized. That is another way of empowering the people.

The last two years we have done a lot of what we call participatory research. Once we didn't have a name for it, but now it is an international organization. People usually think of that as a simple situation where people research their own problems, but it can be used in any situation. For example, everybody knew that Appalachia was in absentee ownership. Nobody knew how it was done or who owned the region, so we didn't have the evidence to know exactly who owned which land. The signs on the mines didn't mean anything. They named a subsidiary of a subsidiary or they used front people. So instead of us doing a research project and saying here is information, we decided to use that project as an empowering program. We empowered people to do their own research. They asked the questions and we said here is how you get to answer the questions. We brought the people together from states for some training about research. They went back and did a study which became the biggest land study that has ever been done in the United States. Over 100 people were involved in the process before they got through. They collected information and in the process of collecting it learned how to do other kinds of research. They started using the process for other things even before they got through the land study.

I remember one county in Kentucky where the school board said they had no money for what the people wanted. They went in and got the records; they analyzed the records and said, "Here is the money." Before, they would not have known how. So they used the process on organizations; they changed laws. One successful group in Kentucky studied the practice where owners of mineral rights would come in and tear up whole farms in explorations. Well, they got a law passed out of that study.

But the land ownership project was such a massive thing there came a time when you

had to know more than could be learned in the short time at Highlander. In fact there was so much material that the biggest computer in Knoxville could not hold it all. But up to that point, everything was done in a participatory way by the people themselves. It was their material being analyzed so they kept control of it. It was studied and summarized by the University of Kentucky press, but there was no author's name on it. It belonged to the 80 to 100 people that made it all their study. That is a good example of how participatory research can empower people and those people are still in power today. If that project had been done for those people, they would have the information but they wouldn't have been empowered by someone else's information. This way it was theirs. Two county papers published their research data in their state, every bit of it. So people had the opportunity not only to use it, but go home with it.

But that will give you an idea of the variety of methods used at Highlander. I would like to answer any questions you have or would like to get your reactions.

Questions and Answers

It is very clear that you have a genius of vision and a clear set of intuitions of where you want to be and how to get there that lets you not need to articulate what these principals and theories are. Do you consciously use theory?

When we started, we didn't know any other way to function except to start with theory. But it was an abysmal failure. We came to the conclusion that all of our theories and all of our answers to problems were not relevant. We had answers to problems people didn't have, and no answers to problems they did have. What we were taught to think of as learning in school didn't have any application. So we had to take a kind of postgraduate course and go back to school with the people and learn from them. At that point, we decided that we would never get anywhere if we tried to learn how to teach but what we would do is try to learn how to learn. When we learned how to learn, then we could help people. So we started learning how people react; we learned from them, how they learned.

We never went through the formulation of theory. That doesn't mean I didn't profit by some of the theoretical background I had, like some of the concepts I got in sociology. I found them useful, but I didn't find it useful to talk about them and not apply them. I found them useful as a kind of background for my thinking. That's the reason I read a lot, and I still read a lot. I don't try to develop a theory to fit a situation, but I agree that you have to have theory. If you can start with the experience of the people, that is the way to get going. People start where they are, not from where the teacher or somebody else is. You can't start from where you ain't, you have to start from where you are.

The trouble we found was we were trying to make the people start from where we were as teachers instead of us trying to start where they were. It was our obligation to find out where they were, and the only way was to ask them or observe them. It is their perception of where they are, not our perception of where they are that is important. Our perception of where people are and their perception of where they are may be two different things. We see them through our background and our way of thinking. That is not a safe way to do it. You have got to find some way to get the people to have a voice; then you know what action to take. We found in the early days that we were one of the 11 poorest counties in the United States according to literacy rate. So a lot of the things we had to do was in nonverbal ways of communication. We couldn't just ask people some things; we had to observe them. Sometimes you find out more about people by watching their kids than by watching them. You had to get close to the situation to listen to their voices too. In that we had no training as you can imagine, so we had to work it out ourselves.

We had great ideas about democracy and how people get together and do things; and they wanted food to eat. They were too hungry to think about these things. We had to learn that. We had to learn a lot of things we didn't know before. We had to learn that even

though people didn't talk about these grand ideas, wonderful things like brotherhood and sisterhood, they had them anyway. They didn't say it in words but they had it. I have heard it said that poor people focus just on material things, but people live by values. But people have to eat; they have to have a job. That is a problem today, people can't get a legal job; they create illegal jobs, like our people always did by moonshining and bootlegging. But people have to find a way to eat whether society provides them an opportunity to work or not.

We also found people had to dream, to say what they wanted, even if they had no way of expressing it in their lives. I have seen a mountain miner, tired, and the kids came to bother him and he gave them a slap. The kid cried, but pretty soon he climbed on his daddy's lap and his tired dad was loving. The kid knew there was another side to his daddy. Somebody who doesn't know people like that see that slap and say "Wasn't that cruel?" Well, that was a cruel act, but it wasn't a cruel person. When you deal with people, you have to know there is a down side and up side to all of us. People have a decent side and that's the side we have to cultivate. People become what they do, and if we get people doing more of that kind of thing than the other, then they become that kind of person.

Somewhere in our beginnings, we heard a lot of nonverbal things about learning and about people that got us back on the right track. We said we had to unlearn much of the stuff that we had learned so there would be room to learn new things. That doesn't mean you have to relearn everything. As I said earlier, many of the concepts I learned theoretically, I made use of in my thinking but not in my talking about them.

Myles, I am curious about the use of music. What do you see as the role of music at Highlander?

My way of approaching the role of music is culturally. We leave out culture so much in education. The whole field of culture, oral history, dancing, singing, story telling, whittling, crafts, all that kind of thing that is very real, very much a part of people's lives. Singing is the most obvious part of that because it is the kind of thing people can hear and pass on. "We Shall Overcome" was used at Highlander as part of a consortium with all kinds of ideas. Zaphia used to tell people to bring their musical instruments. Well, they also told stories and danced. She would get people together to do skits or play acting or something. They would dance and sing and tell stories and jokes--everything was a part of the experience. Singing was integrated with the rest of the culture because it was so integral to the total program. Sometimes we would be working on some problem like labor history and the best way to do it was to act it out. If that was the way to do it, that was the way you do it, right? Or sing it out or tell stories about it from your own experience. We made culture an integral part of the experience because it has always been a powerful thing.

Music kind of steals the show like "We Shall Overcome". Did you ever see the PBS special "We Shall Overcome" last year? It was on our program "We Shall Overcome." It told of its origin, how it was started, how it went around the world. You couldn't do that with everything else at Highlander; there is no way you could share all that with the world. But music gets a bigger play than anything else. The thing is to make culture a part of learning because culture is a part of people's experience.

We were interested in democratizing culture, in having a pluralistic culture. Just as we wouldn't try to get everyone in a workshop to develop the same plans while working on different situations, so we don't expect people to have the same cultural background. Our respect for the cultural backgrounds of people is part of being a democratic society.

I am curious about what you are curious about right now as a result of this week, this past year. What are you thinking about?

I keep learning, you know. I just pick up ideas, like a sponge, of everything I can get and then I try to sort it out; not sort out so

much theoretically but tied a lot to action. One of the problems I have with theory that I have no evidence of having any kind of reality is that it is so easy for somebody to write something that sounds good, but who doesn't know what they are talking about. Then that is used as the basics of somebody else's documentation. It never had any reality. But it has become the basis of what could have worked in practice. There comes a basis of theorizing about what could help in practice, so I think I would like the people to test out their ideas. Ivan Illich, this friend of mine, and I have had a lot of discussions, and when my daughter met him she thought he was just an elitist with all these ideas. She was really right. Illich had all these ideas, beautiful ideas, exciting ideas, very stimulating ideas. I always found it very stimulating to be around him. But once I asked him why he didn't test out some of his theories in Cuernavaca. I said I always took advantage of chances to test out my ideas to see if they worked. You are remembered more for what you do than for what you say. So I asked how his ideas will be tested. He said, "Well, people like you test them out." I said "I've ideas of my own I'm going to test out. It seems to me the only person who will test out your ideas is somebody who never had ideas of their own." I think there is a problem there somehow about how ideas get tested.

My sense is if you are acting in a critical way, then that action is in fact informed by some kind of theory. I think that the problem is when we try to separate the two, as if to suggest that everything we do we have to filter through some kind of explicit theory. In the politics of everyday life, in fact, is where you see theory and practice coming together. Maybe it is important to think about theory not separate from practice but think about it as praxis.

That is the right idea. Theory and practice are always intertwined. When I was talking about Highlander students, they had a theory about what they were going to do; now they were going back to test it. If they learned how to analyze their experience, then they didn't have to come back to Highlander to do it; they could do it at home. But then they had to have another hypothesis or theory on which to move next. That goes on all the time. If people don't know where they are going, they are not going anywhere. They are just going in a circle chasing their tails. They don't theorize about what they are going to do.

Praxis is the right idea. I think the idea of praxis is what we have to think about more than any other word, that concept of theory and practice intertwined--you don't know where one begins and the other starts. That is why I never speak in terms of overall theories. I think of theory as pointing out the direction and not as a sign in the air above our head, saying here it is. It presents a not unreasonable goal, an ever expanding goal. There needs to be some way to tell if you're on the road. That is a kind of theorizing; it tells us if we're moving in the right direction. For example, it tells us if we're just going along with the system and not basing our action on needs of people. You need some goal posts along the way, and that has to be done theoretically.

Could you talk about democracy and pluralism. A lot of people would say they are not the same thing at all. I would like to hear what you have to say about that.

Modernistic society is best done under fascism. If we want to have a really monolithic society, it should be done under fascism. If we want a democratic society, we don't know how that is done, but we do know it isn't done the way fascism is done. People here have asked me if I felt my life was a failure because of never achieving all my goals. I said no, I had to make a choice between fascism and some sort of democracy; the fascism that existed and some kind of imagined democracy. I am very happy to have spent my life not being part of the fascist part of society. Democratic pluralism means that you welcome differences. You are not into efficiency as goal. That will get you no where fast; it is not very important. I am not interested in efficiency. I am interested in people living a full life now and

with hope for a better life for all people later on. They need to get a little taste of decency or they are not going to value it. I believe we build revolutionary change as we go along--as we contribute toward it. I am very comfortable with that kind of thing. Our system was built up when the whole United States had a smaller population than Tennessee. People were pretty well represented in that system then. But as we got larger, the system remained the same. There was less and less representation. Look at the last electoral process and the choices we had to vote for or not vote for. Most people decided not to vote because it would not have made any difference one way or another to have a voice in it.

When you get smaller units then people can't know everything that is going on. Then we're less efficient, less fascist, sort of pluralistic. I think that enriches us. What would an orchestra be if you only had a harp? You would hear an awful lot of harp but nothing else. You need all of the instruments to play together. So we need to do things together; not all things but some things. I think that is the mistake we make when we think everybody has to work together on everything. We have to work together on some things but on other things we don't have to work together. That is the kind of world I would like to see--sort of inefficient smallness where people really express themselves and see what they are.

Given the global economy that we are all facing, it appears to me that one of the major problems when it comes to oppressed people and a capitalist system is that capitalism seems to now be a worldwide entity. When it comes to democratic pluralism where different cultures are indeed tolerated, where efficiency is no longer the goal, it seems that sort of movement flies in the face of very strong capitalism, and that if you are not smart or a student in the capitalist arena, you will be impoverished from the economic perspective. Black and hispanic communities want the part of capitalist pie but in order to get it, they have to trade off some cultural advantages.

Two things are important. One is that we no longer have national capitalism; we have international capitalism because capitalism by its very nature necessitates growth. If a company does not grow, it is taken over by another company that does grow. They have to grow to make the capitalist system work. Now the United States has outgrown the economy here; they have exploited that to give them maximum profit. Now they have to move into the world economy. There is no question that we have world capitalism. You can't change a system unless you understand it and know it; so we can't understand it as national capitalism; that way it doesn't exist anymore. We need to see it as world capitalism. So, if you are going to be monolithic, not in the old fascist idea of a national capitalism but a world capitalism, you will have to have everybody at the same pot all over the world, not just in any one nation. So it is even more important to decide whether we want to play that game and be part of the world melting pot and to loose our identities, to ban the right to express ourselves culturally in our own ways.

Your other point is well taken because if you want to make it in the system then you have to support the system. People have to decide whether they want to wait for the long haul and change the system, in other words to have something more than capitalism, or to buy into it. That is a tough problem if you are going to survive. You might have one foot out of the system, but you have to have at least one foot in for that is where the jobs are, that is where your livelihood is. I think there has to be some sort of compromise there between selling your soul and survival.

I personally am against the capitalistic system and have been all my life. I don't think capitalism can ever be democratic. Socialism may not be democratic either. We never had real socialism. Stalinism wasn't socialism; what they are doing in China is not socialism. So we don't know what socialism could be. We do know what capitalism is, what it has to be. Capitalism has to continue to get bigger and has to exploit more people and resources;

it will die if it doesn't. There is nothing personal about that. Charles Wilson, the president of General Motors, was criticized for moving General Motors plants out of Detroit. They said, "Don't you have any concern for the people in Detroit?" He said, "I might have a personal feeling, but as chairman of the board, I don't have any. If I didn't maximize profits, I could be sued by the stockholders for not doing my job. My job is to maximize profits, not to have consideration for others." That is capitalism; it has to be that way. It is the nature of the system. It seems to me we are going to have to have another kind of system. I don't know what it is, but money cannot be the top and bottom line and the only priority to be considered. To change a system, you have to understand it. Last year a group of teachers from the South came to Highlander to try some workshop discussions. They were new at this; they had never gotten together before. It soon became obvious they didn't understand the school system. They thought the school system started with the principal of the school they worked for. They didn't know that most decisions had been made before they got to the principal, and few of them ever got to be made with the teachers. Because they didn't understand the system, they thought the principal was mean. Like Charles Wilson, he would lose his job if he didn't do what he is supposed to do according to the state. The state would lose the money if they didn't do what the national government wanted them to do. If you don't understand those things, you can't talk about changing these things.

So you have to understand this world system. I remember doing a paper with Helen Lewis about 10 years ago on the role of third world countries. We agreed that what happened to third world countries is going to effect this country more than things here. Right now the wheat farmers here in Montana can't sell their wheat because the banks want to collect their money from the third world countries which don't have the money to buy their wheat. One guy said, "Twenty years ago you said we had to understand this system of nationalist capitalism, and now you say it is world capitalism. What are you going to talk about next?" I said, "I don't run the show. I try to study and learn about it." Contradictions are part of the dichotomy of life. We will never have a situation where there are no contractions. You can talk about violence and different forms of violence, but you can choose a lesser form of violence. We know as agitators, you can't shoot ideas in peoples' heads, you have to have nonviolent activity. Education per se is nonviolent, and anyone talking about social change has to work nonviolently. Right now the miners, who have a history of militancy, are in a nonviolent campaign; they quote Martin Luther King and talk about Highlander. Those ideas are good to learn and understand, but there is still violence against them even though they are nonviolent. So you always have contradictions. Contradictions are nothing to avoid; they are something to analyze just like a crisis. I always welcomed crises because people learn faster under strife when they are emotionally involved. They think of things they never thought of before. Most people try to resolve a crisis by taking people into the system. I resolve them by making people mad at the system so they can have a smoldering anger at the system. You could use things like that to help people understand. Learning is best in a social movement when there is a struggle for injustice. When sparks fly, the fire spreads to help a lot of people.

If it is true that capitalism is all pervasive, is it possible to change the system without causing the collapse of capitalism? If capitalism collapses, what will replace it?

Capitalism, as I understand it and as capitalists say and do, is a system that has to get bigger and bigger. That has to be changed. We can never have a democratic society as long as that is the dominant course. There are a lot of good things in this country, and a lot of good things elsewhere. We were talking about how people analyze those good things in their own country and in other countries. For example, since I believe the future is going to be built on the present, our freedom

of speech has to be carried on. Once you have freedom of speech and the rights of protest, you can never change that. That's one of the contributions that we have to make to the world because that is further advanced in this country. People build on what they know and they don't know anything about freedom of speech. They don't know what you are talking about. People in this country do know about freedom of speech even if we only give lip service to it. And that is a contribution which we can make to the world.

My contributions have been different. To me, building islands of decency was terribly important from the beginning. I am an upholder of absolute freedom of speech. That is why I am upset by President Bush's obsession with pushing change in laws about desecrating the flag. I believe in concern for what the flag should stand for, but not the flag itself. That is something serious because we've got to keep those rights, not only keep them here but share them with the world. I think there are a lot of good values in America. Most people don't realize that Karl Marx saw capitalism as the greatest thing that happened to this country. He thought we had to go through that stage of industrial development before we could have socialism. You learn to work together in industry. He saw ahead, without knowing a lot about the third world power, that the time would come when capitalism would get so big it would squeeze out everything else. That is what happened.

So I don't care what it is called. That kind of economics never allows for people. Money, as they say, is the bottom line but then the people have to come under the bottom line.

Is it possible we have to go to capitalism to reach some kind of socialism? What do you see happening? Is it possible to think that systems will go so far and the people will rise up for change?

I think the people will awaken to the situation when it gets oppressive enough so there is no way they can avoid seeing it. On the other hand, I don't think any change is brought about by people who are hopeless, by people who are so depressed they can't think and act. People have to have hope, have to see the possibility of change and want change. If things are too bad, people will be hopeless, and they will despair. For the last 20 years I have said we need the third world countries to get us off dead center. I used to work at a saw mill, and as the wheel went around, the arm sometimes got stuck in the center and wouldn't go up or down. What we had to do was sit on it to get it off dead center. I use that figure to talk about how we are on dead center. We're in what we call the organizing stage. What we have to do is sit on it and somehow get it off dead center. We are not going anywhere with these short-range goals; they always tend to reinforce the system. Third-world pressure and our concern with third-world countries can get us off dead center and get us moving. We have to understand our interrelationships in a lot of ways. For example, we banned DDT in this country but send it to Latin America where they spray it on fruit and send it back for us to eat.

I think we have to learn from third world people. Not that they are better--they have not been corrupted; they have not been exposed. They may have a fresher look at things and may come at it from a different perspective. So I have hope that they may get us moving and get us thinking. It means we have to understand that we are part of that world, that we have to work with people throughout the world. The president of one of the companies in the United States that has had a lot of expansion in the third world countries said in the New York Times a couple of weeks ago that we had to change the laws in this country to make it easier for them to make a profit in other countries. He said they are no longer responsible to this country; they are systems of the world.

What does it mean in this internationalization of capitalism that we now have factory workers in Tennessee who are being portrayed as having accomplished a great victory because they have rejected the oppression of this union that was trying to take it over in the name of Japanese-owned factory?

I predicted that vote because they had not experienced the situation long enough to be industrial workers. The country people are some of my relatives and they are hungry; they want good-paying jobs. So they will settle for anything as long as they get those wages. They don't care about their health right now; they care about debts. Eventually they will realize they have no freedom and they are part of a machine. It takes some time to become unhappy about that, but eventually they will. Then they will want a union so they will have a voice. Now they don't want a voice; they want to be told. It just takes time.

Radical Pedagogy: Constructing an Arch of Social Dreaming and a Doorway to Hope

Peter McLaren

Dedicated to Myles Horton

I have been invited to speak to you today on the topic of social context and learning in adult education. I don't specialize in the field of adult education, as many of you are aware. Most of the work that I do at the Center for Education and Cultural Studies is with public school teachers and students, prospective teachers, university professors, and student and community activists and it cross-cuts a number of disciplinary domains: the politics of literacy, the sociology of education, political theology and the theology of liberation, curriculum theory, cultural studies, and critical social theory. Today's talk will no doubt reflect these various theoretical trajectories as I discuss some of my own work, and that of other educators who place a great deal of emphasis on social context both in their research and teaching; and while it is not specifically located within the general tradition of adult education, I hope my talk today can shed some modest light on some of the issues and concerns to which you have invited me to speak.

I am honored to be on the platform today with Myles Horton and Janine Windy Boy, both of whom exemplify in my mind the best attributes of the critical educator. The work of Myles and Janine is a shining example of what I refer to as "critical pedagogy," especially in the way in which their respective projects of liberation have managed to actively contest and disrupt the ideological mechanisms and social practices of domination which plague so many levels of our society; in Myles' case, I'm referring to the path-breaking work he has done with the people of Appalachia and other economically disadvantaged groups of the South, especially in conjunction with his work in literacy campaigns, antipoverty organizations, labor unions and civil rights movement--all of which began with the Highland Folk School at Monteagle, Tennessee in 1932 and which continues to this day at the Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee; and in Janine's case I am thinking of her heroic struggles with the Crow Nation and other indigenous groups, a struggle which takes many forms, not least of which has been unwavering community activism and resistance against unrelenting forces of oppression and the logic of colonization which continue to exact so much suffering among the Crow and other Native American groups across the country, and the important work being done at Little Big Horn College in Montana. Both Myles and Janine recognize that the homogeneity of our cultural world needs to be detotalized through a recognition of and respect for difference and that the historical voice of liberation is the voice of the poor, the marginalized, the downtrodden, and the oppressed. Both give serious recognition to the revelation of the oppressed without romanticizing their plight. I would also like to say that I am honored to be in the presence of such a distinguished group of adult educators.

Some of you may find what I am about to share with you unremarkable or relatively commonplace, especially those of you who are familiar with the work of Myles Horton, Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, and others who work from a critical education perspective. Others may find my perspective to be relatively unfamiliar, perhaps initially unsettling, or maybe even irrelevant to what you do or think you should be doing in adult education.

Before I go any further, let me situate my discussion by making some initial comments on what I am referring to when I use the term "critical educator" or "critical pedagogy." I'll do this by summarizing some of the primary initiatives taken within the critical education tradition over the last fifteen years. Although their work has frequently been marginalized

and shunted to the periphery of the debate over education in this country, critical educators have maintained a particular cogent grasp of the link between the actual forms which schooling takes and the wider structural arrangements of society. They have both revealed and unsettled the ways in which the inequities of power and privilege that exist in classrooms--with respect to the acquisition and distribution of knowledge and the institutional practices which support them--are an extension of the conditions which prevail in the large colonial society.

Despite their imposed otherness, they have managed to counter elitist, racist, and sexist assumptions in dominant forms of teaching and curricula, by sounding disruptive voices from the margins. In addition to providing both an oppositional language of critique and contestatory social praxis, they have paved the way for new forms of social analysis. For instance, in their recent engagement with continental social theory and other new developments within the social sciences, they have placed under hermeneutical stress the truths--of seeing, naming, and ordering reality--which modernity has so arduously struggled to justify either within an objectivist world of scientific "truth" or upon transcendental grounds of universal reason. Their analyses have often served to counter the influence of a debilitating positivism and instrumental rationality which--at least in the case of educational theory and curriculum development in the United States--continues to pervasive tendency of reducing questions of ethics and social justice to those of epistemology, developmental theories of cognitive/behavioral development, or to those dealing with human capital and group management theory. In particular, these educators have been successful and for the most part uncompromising in establishing connections among dominant forms of education--and hence dominant forms of literacy--and the present regimes of truth and dominant social practices which help constitute them.

By distancing themselves from their own "social present," they have managed to defamiliarize the conventions or genres of articulating the real and the common sensical. That is, what we conventionally accept as the normal, the mundane, and the everyday are thrown into disarray. Practical consciousness, as Raymond Williams described ideology, is radically dismembered by this group of educational theorists. While teaching discourses and practices project into "nature" their own artifices calling them "reality," critical educators have helped to throw this reality into question, destabilizing its dominant assumptions. Thus, through such efforts, educators may begin to see their teaching as a means by which the teaching profession has constructed the "normative teaching event" in which social life is codified and legitimated by existing relations of power and privilege.

The critical educational tradition has provided teachers with modes of self-critical reflection through which they can make the transition from seeing what they do in the classroom as isolated, individual concerns to understanding them as profoundly social matters requiring a pedagogical *praxis* that is able to reflexively change the knowledge base which informs their classroom teaching. The lesson to be learned here is that all action has a structure of intelligibility to it, and to say that liberation starts with action--as some so-called progressive educators are want to do--is to woefully misunderstand the relationship between action and discourse. I want to emphasize here what I have termed "critical subjectivity." Here subjectivity assumes a methodological position of both analyzing forms of oppression in the classroom and larger society in terms of how they have developed the conditions for their own perpetuation and for disposing teaching as an engagement in the nonhabitual, in making the familiar strange and the strange familiar.

Specifically with reference to the current literacy debate and the struggle within the academy over the "canon," they eschew a propensity to see the world in Manichean terms, as gripped by a titanic struggle between the forms of civilized "high" culture and the contaminating forces of the culture of the masses. They reject the recent assaults by critics such as Allan Bloom, whose *Closing of*

the American Mind has served as a reactionary bludgeon in debates over the liberal arts curriculum, and E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy*, designed as a cultural thesaurus for every aspiring student. In the mawkish elegance of Bloom's highbrow paradise, whose salons and drawing rooms are populated mainly by *belles lettristes* from ivy league schools, and other descendants from the White European, the educator can confront in its most hideous manifestation, power's vertiginous intoxication with the selective tradition of knowledge production in our schools. It is here in which the classical tradition of European literature assume an exclusive monopoly on the power to sanctify human life.

The critical education tradition has, through an emphasis on social theory, attempted to uncover how such a European legacy such as "the Great Works of the Western World" privileges the discourse of the white, male colonizer. The subject--or model reader--that has been constructed out of many of the "Great Books" have been shown by critical educators to be characterized by a geopoltical construction of the center and the margins within the expansive hegemony of the conqueror. It is also to lock up the ancestral cargo of the Greeks, Romans, Germans, French, English, and other civilizations of the center into the sedimentary layers of our collective subjectivity. The Argentinean theologian of liberation, Enrique Dussel, put it well in his book, *The Philosophy of Liberation*, in which he remarks: "From the 'I conquer' applied to the Aztec and Inca world and all America, from the 'I enslave' applied to Africans sold for the gold and silver acquired at the cost of the death of Amerindians working in the depths of the earth, from the 'I vanquish' of the wars of India and China to the shameful 'opium war'--from this 'I' appears the Cartesian *ego cogito*." What Dussel has so cogently revealed is that the "I think, therefore, I am" of Descartes has provided the empires of the center--England and France as colonial powers, Nazi Germany, and later the United States its Central Intelligence Agency--with the oncological expression of the ideology of the colonizer.

The work undertaken by critical theorists has helped us to see this literature as essentially "constructions" socially produced and reflecting particular modes of subjectivity for their readers as well as providing specific subject positions which can be located geopolitically in the way in which the expansive hegemony of the European/North American conqueror has been able to define who is permitted to inhabit the centers of the empire and who is to be policed at its margins.

The critical education (I'm using the term "tradition" here rather tentatively since I may be romanticizing what is, in essence, a body of work which exists on the borderline between contemporary theorizing and pedagogical practice) has kept alive--in theory and practice alike--the link between the struggle for critical knowledge and struggle for democracy: perceiving them as inescapably intertwined.

The tradition of critical pedagogy has continually brushed against the grain of those strands of the mainstream approaches to schooling, including both liberal and conservative accents, which still enjoy a relatively uncontested hegemony. As well as defamiliarizing the "real-seeming" of classroom relations, they have helped to uncover ways in which domination and exploitation have become systematized, removing the cloak of sanctity from existing social relations and cultural practices. For instance, they have shown how many teachers who refer to themselves as progressive preach liberation in such an ethereal fashion it declares them innocent in the face of so much injustice. Just look at the drop-out rates (Latino students rightly call them "push-out" rates), the persistence of tracking, the sexism and racism which has become institutionalized in our public school system as well as in higher education, the unequal outcomes among minority groups that are structured into the system, and the emphasis on control-oriented and narrow technical knowledge that shapes dominant approaches to curriculum design.

Operating within a theoretical subterrain outside of the policing structures constituted by the dominant culture's "imperial" discour-

ses (which set the limits of what can be said, by whom, and under what conditions), where both the teacher and the student rarely assume their appointed role and places, the tradition of critical pedagogy continues to make unconventional alliances between reality and representation, between description and meaning. What critical pedagogy has managed to do is to seriously challenge the social uses of pedagogy; so I like to think about this tradition as not a hidebound compendium of prescriptions and proscriptions but rather a locus of ideas and practices where new inscriptions and transformations can take place. Critical educators are not, in my mind, submission to any one disciplinary trajectory or socio-political current; they may be considered "critical" in the best sense of the term in that they are fiercely antagonistic to conventional ideas and practices which constitute the expansive hegemony of disabling social relations which promote gender, race, and class oppression, and other oppression such as those which have to do with sexual preference and religious and political freedom. Broadly speaking, critical educators have ruptured the sense of the objectivity and homogeneity of the social and the proliferation of the logic of equivalence.

The tradition of critical pedagogy works from a particular conception of culture which has far removed its standard view as a monadic site of harmony and control. Within the critical perspective, culture is site of disjuncture, rupture, and contradiction--a terrain of contestation that serves as the loci of multivalent practical-discursive structures and powers. That is, culture is viewed as structured by a combativeness among competing discourses. Culture is a labyrinthine play of discourses, including the practical and material effects of their multifarious configurations and articulations; it is the place where signifying chains flow into the catacombs and subterranean spaces of the social, as well as the structured space of social silence where coherency and uniformity is forged. That is to say, culture is perhaps more appropriately viewed as a heterogeneous and transgressive zone, as circuits of representation on a battlefield which is unequally and unevenly occupied. Culture is a power/knowledge network in which a specific reality is produced through institutional practices and discursive regimes which allow such a reality to proceed untrammelled by democratic imperatives.

Within this view of culture we need a new understanding of power, and people such as Michel Foucault have helped us in this regard. Power, as Foucault has shown us, is not a capricious spirit; it is not a disembodied force that adventitiously insinuates itself in human affairs. Rather, it is historically rooted, socially constructed, participates in a cultural politics, and serves interests which are structured into society. It can, of course, serve to resist these same conditions. If discourses transform ways of speaking into ways of action, we have to see power implicated in this process. Foucault has shown us that the exercise of power creates knowledge and that knowledge also induces effects of power. I think this is what Foucault meant when he said everything is already interpretation. We don't possess power or even apply it since it is everywhere and contiguous with discourses which help to constitute our bodies and structure the direction of our desire. Power produces certain forms of knowledge and such knowledge is used to legitimate and extend the interests of those served by the effects of such power and to justify the subjection and certain groups on the basis of transcendent norms. Power therefore *subjectivizes* (permits us to speak and desire) and also *subjugates* (by empowering certain discourses over others and thereby constraining the way we can think about our own subjective formation and act to reshape those cultural forms and social practices which constrain and disrupt our narratives of and paths to liberation and freedom). Every ideological guarantee--or idea that goes unquestioned in public discourse and social practice--carries with it unstated assumptions, unsuspected consequences, shrouded in ethical and epistemological issues. All discourses bear the effects of power.

So what is the point of all of this for educators? I want to suggest that a renewed

understanding of culture can assist teachers to situate their own classroom practices within larger structures of power and privilege so that they are better able to acknowledge the interests served by their own ideological predilections, rather than purging the cultural field of difference through the universal calculus of putatively disinterested, objective analysis.

This perspective of culture slices up its presumed uniformity into diverse pieces of shifting perspectives and untold possibilities. Our teaching practices do not possess norms but continually remake cultural and social norms (which are remade again and again). Our task as critical educators is to disrupt the authority of these practices in the interests of great social justice, of "what could be."

Given the language of efficiency which has brutally and insidiously colonized the disciplinary domain of education in recent years, and the current stress on management techniques, accountability schemes, and classroom-ready curricula--features which readily strip schooling from any substantial concern with justice, equality, or democracy--it is hardly surprising that the debate over culture and schooling has only just begun to spill beyond the cramped and insulated boundaries of mainstream educational research. In particular, Anglo-Saxon educators have been generally incautious about their pretenses to occupying a privileged cultural vantage point with respect to other cultures; they have, for the most part, remained loyal to a view of culture which permits them to anchor their meanings in a bedrock of their own prejudices and in so doing have failed to disturb the popular assurance of received orthodoxies about the cultural fields that inform the classrooms where they teach. The discourse of technocracy, which has insinuated its disturbing presence into school policy and practice over the last decade, and which has been seriously invasive of democratic life, has proliferated due to the lack of attention to the way cultural context has been defined and understood by educators. It is my hope, and I'm sure the hope of a number of you gathered here today, that in taking up the issues at stake in the recent work on context and culture, educators will become better equipped to both resist and transform the recent assault on education in the United States by neoconservatives, reactionaries, and fundamentalists of all sorts--whose disarmingly familiar rhetoric naturalizes oppression and inequality under the guise of meritocracy and fairness--and to strive for a greater role for schools to play in the deepening of our vision of democracy.

Let me conclude here my summary of the critical tradition, which I hope has made clear that all teaching and knowledge formation consists of rhetorical tropes of some kind or another, which both reflect and shape the way we engage, and are transformed by, the polysomy, contradiction, and social, friction of everyday life. This process has been more fully explored in my own work, and the work being carried out at the Center for Education and Cultural Studies, where I have the good fortune of working with Henry Giroux and others on a number of critical themes. Giroux's work, in particular, has advanced the notion that reality does not possess a pre-signifying nature but is an interactive cultural, social, and historical process. What I'd like to emphasize is the important way the critical theorist articulates the relationship between the discourses of literacy and the workings of power, and reveal the various ways in which power operates as a regulating force which conforms to its sway dominant ideologies and their institutionalized supports as well as centralizes and unifies often conflicting and competing discourses and subjectivities in the interest of capitalist social relations. Please be reminded that subjectivity deals with the "inner sign" which must take into account not just our experiences but the language we use to mediate and understand our experiences.

I want to make the case here that, despite their rhetoric of disinterest, traditional models of teaching and learning, as well as those of educational research, are never innocent. I want to go so far as to argue that the construction of knowledge, whether within the precinct of the classroom, or more informally in the world-at-large, is never self-authenticating, self-legitimating, or self-ratifying. The

concept and the real are non-identical or asymmetrical. Put less abstractly, becoming literate or a knowing person is not a process which can determine its own effects or speak its own truth in a manner which transcends its relation to the socio-political context in which meaning takes place. And here we touch on the central theme of today's talk: knowledge or the act of knowing is always a creature of cultural limits and theoretical borders and as such is necessarily implicated in particular "selective" economies of truth, value, and power. Knowledge is always indexical to the context of the knower and known. Knowledge, in other words, is always already implicated in relations of power and power is distributed laterally and historically, which is to say unequally among groups differentiated by race/ethnicity, gender, and class. What people say and do and the interpretations they construct are attached to everything related to the whole of social and material reality, and not just the interests of their respective interpretive communities.

Most mainstream educational research remakes reality within the frames of reference embodied in the language employed by the researcher or else within the researchers' own discursive boundaries. Critical educational research attempts to situate the construction of meaning within the life worlds of the participants themselves and the specificity of historical trends and cultural forms which shape the subjectives of the participants. Research within the critical educational tradition creates conditions which enables individuals to investigate their own reality and the social conditions which shape their daily lives.

In relation to these larger social axes of power, it is necessary for educators to remind themselves: Whose interests are being served in the social act of becoming literate? Where is this process situated ethically and politically in matters of social justice? What principles should we choose in structuring our pedagogical endeavors?

To avoid asking such questions is to run the risk of enlisting our services as educators in such a way as to demote our critical faculties to custodians of sameness and system-stabilizing functions which serve the collective interests and regimes of truth of the prevailing power elite. To assume a "centrist" position--in which a balance of political perspectives is sought by refusing to capitulate to the discourse of either left or right--is to support those whose interests are preserved by the status quo, it is to patrol the ideological borders of common sense, finding in the stability and familiarity of the mundane and predictable a recompense for the current instability of social life.

Not only is it important to contest what I have called a "centrist" position, but it is also important to challenge what liberals have called the "pluralist" position. The key to establishing knowledge forms which are liberating is not simply to offer a menu of every conceivable position, since it is obvious that many of these perspectives harbor racist, classist, and sexist assumptions. We need not insist on cultural diversity, if by that we mean transforming culture into a living museum of contemporary choices, but a *critical diversity*. A critical diversity means that choices need to be seen as social practices which are themselves historically and socially constructed and teachers need to learn to distinguish cultural choices as liberating or oppressive. In other words, moral, political, or epistemological choices under the name of democracy or totalitarianism all occupy specificable locations in relations of power. Within pluralism, demands for justice among the oppressed are often treated simply as threats to diversity, as privileging one group at the expense of the freedom of another. This position refuses to recognize that choices are themselves social constructions which exist in relations of power and must be understood as existing asymmetrically and hierarchically in relation to other choices.

For instance, the pluralist may argue that women and men need to be given an equal voice in our society but fail to recognize that the frames of reference for how such voices are to be heard are constructed within a decidedly male discourse. Similarly, a critical pedagogy needs to counter the essentialization of difference which occurs in the liberal

humanist position with facile tolerance or celebration of difference or diversity. This position amounts to a mere tolerance of the multiplicity of the voices of the marginalized, the disenfranchised, the oppressed. As Henry Giroux and others have pointed out, a celebration of difference without investigating the ways in which difference or diversity becomes constituted in oppressive asymmetrical relations of power often betrays a simple-minded romanticism and exoticization of the "Other."

This brings me to two important issues which I want to only touch on briefly before I get to some studies which bear directly on the topic of social context. The first has to do with the relationship of education to theory, and the second deals with the issue of language and experience and language and clarity of expression.

Let me share my position on the importance of theory and for educators and students employing a theoretical language. Theory occurs as teachers come to understand what they know about their teaching and out of this create new and informed meanings. Theorizing, the way in which I am envisioning it, does not have to be applied to practical situations because there is no separation of one from the other to start with. The relationship between theory and practice needs to be understood as dialectical, such that theory always emerges out of practice, and practice is always informed by some form of theory. Just because people don't self-consciously raise questions about the theories which inform their practice doesn't mean they don't have theories, it simply means that they are inarticulate about them. Theory is not a means of distancing yourself from the minute and particulars of everyday life; rather, theory is an effort to understand the liturgies of the mundane and the everyday even more profoundly. Theory moves toward what Mathew Lamb calls the "complexity of the concrete" indicating the contradictory tensions in reality. In this way, theory can guide the transformation of reality.

There are some very naive educators who claim that critical education must start with action. I would argue that critical education leads to action--but it's a particular form of action we call *praxis*. To claim that action and experience is all that you need is wrong-headed and reflects a profoundly stupid understanding of emancipatory teaching and social transformation and really constitutes a profound misunderstanding of people such as Paulo Freire and Myles Horton. Experience or action does not speak for itself. There is no pristine, unmediated ground of experience from which to speak or act. I disagree that experience provides you with some kind of transparent access to reality. Experience should never be celebrated uncritically. No experience and language are irrevocably intertwined. One cannot simply give primacy to experience, without taking into account how experience is structured through language. In my classes, I often hear teachers complaining: "What can all this critical theoretical stuff do for me? I live my experience in the classroom. This is just a lot of big words that don't speak to my experiences." I think that it is very important that critical theorists speak to both the heart and the mind of the educator, of course, since critical knowledge is not only an abstraction, but something that is embodied, felt, and lived out. But it is also important to remember that many teachers read their experiences in ways that blame students, demonize them, and construct them as the "other." In some cases, for instance, their experience is informed by the language or discourse of reactionary conversatism. Here educators confront the legacy left by the colonizer, especially in relation to minority populations in U.S. schools where there have been concealed attempts to integrate the oppressed into the moral imperatives of the ruling elite. Some teachers have, after all, embodied in their teaching practices discourses supported by the Reagan administration in which Blacks, Hispanics, and other groups are essentialized as either biologically or culturally deficient and treated as a species of inferior vertebrates, as phylogenetically defective, lobotomized Allan Blooms, driven by urges and impulses either to violence or lethargy. Such a perspective of the subaltern also sur-

faces, in more sophisticated, but not less insidious forms, as in the remonstrations of liberal reformers who argue that Blacks and Hispanics can become good, obedient workers just like their lighter-skinned counterparts. So we see that we are dealing with more than simply experience here, but also a language of analysis.

On the other hand, one cannot simply privilege the language of theory, either because ideology is not only lived through experience but also through language. Learning the language of racism, of decoding its formation in institutional and social sites, is not the same thing as living as a victim of it. I think it is important to think of language not as prior to experience, but as constitutive of experience. Social experience can be critically transformed through a language that enables an educator or student to situate himself or herself as an active social, cultural, and historical agent. We need a language that enables us to understand the process, always profoundly social processes, through which we have been formed, which includes the concrete and specific constitution of the historical moment in which we have been given our voice with which to speak. Within the uneven topography of needs and desires to which we have given the label "postmodern condition" we too often discover that our voices have been sounded by what Fred Pfeil calls "anonymous, unplaceable tongues" which is the result of the chaos of identity in which we find ourselves uncomfortably installed--a babble of discourses without one orchestrating narrative around which our identities can cohere.

In this age of postmodernism the grand narratives which contained and recuperated our subjectivities within one secure epistemological and moral frameworks are currently splintering and cracking apart. The privatization and withering of the public sphere is being replaced by the conceit of the consumer moment. The doctrine of salvation by consumer freedom is rapidly displacing participatory democracy and communal self-management for the pursuit of private happiness through material acquisition. But if you believe, as I do, along with Raymond Williams, Henry Giroux, and others, that domination cannot exhaust all social experience, then acquiring a critical vernacular can enable us to forge alternative acts and oppositional intentions in that social space which is not already colonized by the oppressor.

For me, the issue for the development of contextual, critical knowledge and understanding is, first of all, affirming the experiences of students to the extent that their voices are part of the dialogue. You affirm that language and speak a language that resonates with the concerns expressed by the students, but you also must be careful not to take such experiences at face value, as if it speaks romantically for itself. What happens, as Paul Willis notes in his book, *Learning to Labor*, when student voices are burdened by the discourse of racism and sexism? For me, the pedagogical implications of this are very important. How do you affirm these voices while at the same time questioning and challenging the racist and sexist assumptions which inform them? The issue here, as my colleague Henry Giroux notes, is understanding that it is imperative for teachers to critically examine the cultural backgrounds and social formations out of which their students produce the categories they use to give meaning to the world. For, as Giroux notes, they are not merely dealing with students who have individual interests, but rather are dealing primarily with students whose stories, memories, narratives, and reading of the world are inextricably related to wider social and cultural formations and categories. It is important here to understand how both the voices and experiences of the student has been subject to and shaped by historical and cultural factors such as those of race, class, and gender. Critical educators can help clarify for groups and individuals their historical experience of oppression by linking individual narratives of specific instances of suffering to an even larger historical framework in order to recover the social memory of awareness of other struggling or oppressed groups. That is, it is important to engage the subjugated knowledge of other subaltern groups so that

we can develop a solidarity with them and at times this will involve our co-suffering with them.

A critical pedagogy is, therefore, one which involves the curtailment of the monopoly of educational power exercised by the established sacerdotal body who preside over the development of curriculum practices and educational policy which obliges such practices and policies to the satisfaction of the heterogeneous exigencies of the competing categories of educators working within the system. But it is also a pedagogy that links such policies and practices the production of social dislocation caused by structural contradictions and the historically-rooted process by which subjectives of both students and teachers are formed such that this social dislocation is allowed to persist and reproduce itself through the schools and other institutional and social networks of power/knowledge. This means more than a simple causal move from understanding to undertaking but rather the social construction of a new historical subject through categories and formulations which exist outside of and in opposition to the expansive colonizing logic of the dominant culture. The new historical subject is not only able to denaturalize the appearances of capitalist society but assume an active resistance against the excremental ethics of postmodern culture--an ethics which is propelled, as Ernesto Laclau has pointed out, through "a pure logic of the circulation of signifiers"--and those contemporary economies of power and privilege which would attempt to subvert the autonomy of the margins in the interests of the discursive and material monopoly of the center. It is a pedagogy which restores the individual as a subject rather than as object of history. Henry Giroux speaks of this process as the development of teachers and students into transformative intellectuals. Transformative intellectuals are mobile subjects sensitive to the shifting contexts of contemporary social life--in fact, to the very contingency of the social and the relation character of all identify--and do not define themselves as the uniform vanguard on a steady march towards the liberation of the proletariat. The transformative intellectual is engaged in the act of the cultural struggle--a cultural politics, if you will--in which new forms of identify and subjective formations are sought. They are sought in the context of a deepening of democracy. The issue here is one of the intersection of language, theory, and power and is not an attempt on the part of theorists to form an elite intellectual class to administer to the uninitiated.

For those of us involved in developing a new, oppositional language, there is always the spurious charge that we are convoluted, abstruse, elitist, and exclusionary because we don't adopt the language of television journalism in our critical work. There have been charges made by some teachers and students--both on the right and the left--that the language of critical educational theory is esoteric, and that leftist critical theorists are primarily concerned with speaking to each other. But this ignores the important point that Richard Wolff has recently made, namely, that major shifts in ways of thinking usually interact in very complex ways with related shifts in modes of speaking and writing. He goes on to say that you cannot equate clear, easy and accessible language with a proper radical's respect for the public because to be clear and easily understood often means resonating ideologically with the prevalent presumptions and desires of the postwar public which has grown increasingly hostile to radical ideas. Those who write with clarity and accessibility in mind may have, Wolff claims, "abandoned the tough work of convincing readers of politically unpopular truths." To write in a clear and straightforward way often means writing in harmony with certain ideological sensibilities of the American public, of which a hostility to radical theory is one. Of course, this is not an argument for complexity for the sheer sake of being complex, nor is it a defense of leftist theorists who are, quite frankly, terrible writers.

Why is it, then, that critical social theorists speak in what often appears to be a dense and arcane--and I dare say often alienating--language? Why can't the social theorist just adopt the language? Why can't the social

theorist just adopt the language and reasoning of the social actors he or she is attempting to study?

Certainly, the critical social theorist must acknowledge the fact that the social actor understands a great deal about the world by virtue of his or her participation in social life; thus, the critical social theorist must include the actor's own rationalization of his or her behavior in any critical analysis. On the other hand, as Anthony Giddens points out, "The rationalization of action is always bounded, in every sort of historical context; and it is in exploring the nature and persistence of these bounds that the tasks of social science are to be found." While, as Giddens notes, we cannot dismiss in our analysis ordinary language and the world of natural attitude, by the same token we need to avoid the *"paralysis of the critical will"* which has been brought about by the rediscovery within social critique of ordinary language and common sense. To engage critically in forms of social life is to participate in that life, but it also means understanding how what is taken to be "common sense" is socially organized through tacit presuppositions which form the background of every discursive formation. Giddens suggests that this involves making a distinction between "mutual knowledge" and "common sense." Mutual knowledge mediates frames of meanings and brackets the factual status of tacit and discursive understandings; it is applied in often tacit and routine ways. Common sense, on the other hand, refers to the "un-bracketing of mutual knowledge" and a consideration of the status of its belief claims. The critical assessment of common sense beliefs does not logically presume drawing upon mutual knowledge and, of course, the reverse is also true.

Following Giddens, the critical discourse which I am trying to develop, respects the mutual knowledge that participants share in everyday life yet such an appreciation does not serve as an obstacle to a critical assessment or "un-bracketing" of such knowledge. Of course, this all ties in at one level with a need to resist prevailing forms of anti-intellectualism.

Much of the specific forms of anti-intellectualism that you find in the United States at this present historical juncture has to do with the production of specific modes of electronically-produced meaning, and I don't have time to go into this here, but it involves an analysis of television, radio, film, and interactive video and computer technology. Such production has to be understood culturally and historically, of course, and if you take a look, for instance, at American film, you will often judge the worth of a film in terms of its ability to entertain while books usually possess two primary categories: entertainment and packaged information for practical application. Foreign films, such as those by Bergman, Wenders, or Fassbinder, are often deemed as unacceptably intellectual and, in their forgoing of the formulaic car chases and their employment of actual dialogue among characters, are often considered brooding and depressing. It appears that Americans don't want to wander too far away from the mind set of cheerful ideological subordination. The happy-face icon emblazoned on T-shirts and buttons and other cultural artifacts that greets you with the exclamation, "HAVE A NICE DAY!" is, of course, sending you concurrent messages beneath the threshold of the obvious which are equally emblematic of the American national consciousness: Don't think too much, it might make you sad; don't waste your time analyzing or worrying about something that can't be changed. Print media is equally as problematic. Popular books today include self-help volumes on stock investment, psychotherapy, home repair, the art of sexual seduction, subliminal programming, etc. Because much of leftist social theory doesn't give you classroom-ready, prepackaged lessons on what to do on Monday morning, but instead raises issues and presents challenges to existing ways of thinking and acting, and because it isn't "lite" entertainment putting, instead, considerable responsibility on the reader to grapple with complex thought, it is often dismissed as irrelevant, jargon-filled, and not much more than discursive puffery. Of course, this attitude is precisely in accordance with the prevailing hegemonic articulations which have

grown up with the logic of consumerism.

In response to the debate over language and clarity, Henry Giroux has made some very significant points which I will attempt to summarize here. First of all, language must be seen as a terrain of contestation that allows for the generation of multiple and competing vocabularies regarding how knowledge, experience, and social relations are constructed in schools and in the larger social order. Language is not only an issue of clarity, but rather an issue of the politics of social and moral regulation that is deeply implicated in the larger politics of representation and power. To claim that complex language must be abandoned in favor of a language of clarity and accessibility often legitimates a form of anti-intellectualism that is increasingly becoming a code word to legitimate a form of red-baiting. A stress on clarity and simplicity frequently suppresses questions of context and the specificity of multiple audiences to which such writing can be directed, suggesting instead that there is a justifiable normative language that should envelope the entire public arena. According to Giroux, this attitude also suggests that language is able to act as a transparent window to the "truth" and that the language which most closely approximates the language of truth is that of popular journalism. Further, such a view takes a demeaning view of the teacher-as-reader, suggesting that teachers are not intelligent enough to grapple with complex theory. This attitude fits perfectly with a society comprised of powerful interest groups many of whom serve to benefit from keeping teachers and other individuals unconnected from a theoretical connection with emancipatory social projects.

If you think that I'm exaggerating the importance of language, ask yourself whether or not ideas are logically prior to language. In answering this question, Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis suggest that we perform an experiment: Take three groups of social science initiates, and provide each with a distinct set of works and rough definitions to supplement their everyday language. Give the first group the terms *function, norm, structural differentiation, role*, and *pattern variable*. Give the second group *marginal productivity, utility function*, and *catharsis*. Plunk them down in Chicago and ask them to explain poverty and crime. Will their "ideas" be unaffected by their "tools"? Bowles and Gintis think not. I agree with them.

The point that I am trying to make to you this morning is a simple one. Please excuse me for repeating it so often, but I think it's important to recognize that language in fact constitutes reality rather than merely reflects it. It is a symbolic medium that actively shapes and transforms the world. This is not meant as a defense of the strong form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, that language determines thought, although I certainly support the notion that language imposes structure and content to our relationship to reality. Language influences thought but does not linguistically determine it since groups often challenge dominant signifying practices for reasons which are highly political. Linguistic communities invest differently in different experiences depending on the contexts which stipulate the struggles over the meanings of such experiences in which such communities--or groups within them--are engaged. Here we need to follow Anthony Wilden's advice in making a distinction between language and discourse; we can't reduce them, one to the other. What is most significant in the present discussion is to recognize the diversity of the discourses created at different times and places, and to realize certain discourses usually dominate others. Wilden defines discourses as "some people talking to some other people about some relationship or another." Unlike language proper, a discourse has a subject and a subject matter, which forms the ground of what all members of society accept as true and false, legal and illegal, legitimate and illegitimate. Language is not some conduit to an immutable order of coherence and stability but is generative of the reality which it evokes and to which it speaks. Of course, my emphasis here on language and experience, discourse, and praxis, could make me, in the eyes of some social theorists, some sort of empiricist to which I would answer "yes" if this is taken to mean empiricist in Raymond

Williams' fashion of challenging the categories which the human subject is produced through the relationship between linguistic constructions and social life.

Language always stamps the world with a social presence which is never neutral or unproblematic. When meaning is produced through language unreflectively to the extent that it gets sedimented into common sense knowledge--which we call ideology (properly speaking, even critical knowledge is very much ideological)--it often masquerades as a "fixed truth" or "a brute fact" about the social world, as if such "factual knowledge" were immune to particular relations of power or certain material interests. Knowledge is never immune. All knowledge speaks to particular interests, particular relations of power in which certain groups benefit over others and certain narratives of identity are accorded a certain status over others. Again, I suppose this is what Foucault meant when he said that everything is already interpretation. The language I'm using right now at this moment certainly isn't neutral and I would never claim otherwise. It is already populated by interpretations of others.

I've spent considerable time in setting out the importance of recognizing the relationship between language, discourse, and power because I think it is vitally important that educators understand their own situatedness within the professional and practical discourses which they draw upon in their daily work. It is also important to understand the limitations of the languages that are made available for helping them to understand both their own everyday experiences and the categories their students use to speak *their* reality, their truth, including the relationship between such categories and the cultural forms and modes of subjectivity in which they become articulated.

Let me turn now to some recent studies which help add some narrative as well as some explanatory substance to some of the ideas surrounding the topic of knowledge and context. The primary context of knowledge is the language that speaks it, and the form which that knowledge takes. For instance, to use terms given to us by Jurgen Habermas, knowledge can assume certain knowledge-constituting interests. It can be *technical knowledge*, which helps individuals and groups in facilitating technical control over their surroundings. This is the instrumental knowledge of the natural sciences, which claims for itself an unbiased or value-neutral status via strict methodological procedures. *Practical knowledge*, on the other hand, results from the process of meaningful dialogue and grasping the social meanings constitutive of a shared lifeworld, tradition, culture, and history. This type of knowledge relies on interpretive understanding which can inform and guide practical judgments, as well as the interpretation of texts and social events. *Emancipatory knowledge*, on the other hand, seeks a form of non-alienated communication and an understanding of the social contradictions which stand in the way of human freedom and social justice. This form of knowledge moves beyond subjective knowledge to that of critical praxis. As Habermas has further noted, each knowledge has its own criteria of validity, and you can't judge one in terms of the other. You can't judge critical knowledge, for instance, in terms of its technical potential to enhance the control of the physical environment. The type of knowledge I will be emphasizing in the following studies is that of critical knowledge.

The first study I want to review is one which was recently conducted by Lois Moll and his associates, Carlos Yelez-Ibanez and James Greenberg, at the University of Arizona. Moll studied families in Tucson, Arizona, who lived in an Hispanic, predominately Mexican, working-class community. His idea was to create collaborative activities among teachers that would draw upon what he terms the "funds of knowledge" that the families in the area already possess. His analysis focused not only on how literacy activities occurred within the households of the community, but examined the features of a significant and pervasive socio-cultural practice or activity which Moll and his researchers call "confinanza" or mutual trust. This term, explains Moll, refers to reciprocal exchange

relations that form social networks among households in this working-class community, which were often developed in response to difficult economic situations. Now these networks also penetrated the labor market in setting up pipelines to possible jobs in both the formal and informal economy. Specific markets included child care, plumbing, construction, and folk medicine. Shared proficiencies in these areas served as social contexts for the construction of knowledge in the classrooms.

What Moll and his researchers did was to investigate how knowledge gets constructed within the family dwelling: *within* the family in terms of job sharing, and *between* the families of this particular working-class community.

Moll wanted to understand the qualitative characteristics of the pedagogies employed by parents, as well as by uncles, aunts, and community leaders. His goal was to educate the teachers in the local schools, how to affirm and build upon the funds of knowledge which the students brought with them into the classroom from the surrounding community. The funds of knowledge possessed by certain families were quite wide ranging and abundant. Parents and relatives were knowledgeable in a variety of areas including soil cultivation, planting, seeding, water distribution and management, animal husbandry, veterinary medicine, ranch economy, auto mechanics, carpentry, masonry, electrical wiring, fencing, herbal cures, midwifery, and first aid.

So Moll analyzed how the specific household activities made use of these funds of knowledge and the domains within which they were organized and transmitted. Furthermore, Moll stressed the social matrix in which funds of knowledge were acquired. That is, he resisted seeing funds of knowledge as simply a repertoire of skills, and focused instead on the various *contexts* in which these funds of knowledge were used, and how knowledge was socially organized within them. The social relations provided a motive and a context for applying and acquiring knowledge. Much of the teaching and learning that went on in the household was obtained by the children not through imposition of adults, but rather through the children's own interests and their questions. In Moll's school-based literacy project, teachers obtained funds of knowledge by connecting the literacy activities in their classrooms to parents, community organizations, libraries, and other resources.

In the literacy projects, students initiated almost all of the writing. Some students chose to communicate with a school in Puerto Rico with a computer; others students formed a social group who preferred to be taught in Spanish. Some students chose as their topic of interest, the study of how buildings were constructed. This was an interesting choice considering the fact that house construction was one of the most prominent funds of knowledge found in the homes within this community. Parents were invited to the school to speak on this and related topics, and the children were surprised by the thought of seeing their parents in the role of experts, especially given some of the parents' lack of formal schooling. Parents contributed substantively to the development of lessons, and their funds of knowledge were deliberately accessed for academic purposes. Moreover, this was an intellectual contribution to the content and process of classroom learning. In their classroom literacy approaches, teachers were able to tap the following funds of knowledge; the student's own knowledge; the knowledge possessed by students' parents and relatives; individuals from the teachers' own personal network of friends and colleagues; school staff and teachers; community members without school-age children; university faculty and students.

Moll concludes his study by arguing that both the content and process of exchange of funds of knowledge developed in households are enormously useful for classroom instruction. By incorporating social networks of the home into instruction, teachers can mobilize funds of knowledge in order to transform classrooms into more advanced contexts for teaching and learning. This is especially true, claims Moll, in bilingual classrooms, where special linguistic characteristics allow students access to broader and more diverse social networks and funds of knowledge. Moll's re-

search points to one way in which classrooms can be viewed in the context of broader social relations and practices wherein the funds of knowledge which exist within the students' community become the most important resource for educational change.

Let me turn now to another study which appears in the forthcoming *Multicultural Education and Empowerment*, edited by Christie Sleeten. In her analysis of a high school in the District of Columbia, Signithia Fordham develops an alternative way of peer-proofing Black students' academic performance which will directly empower the students themselves rather than the school officials. This is an approach that goes against the general policy of placing academically successful Black students into advanced placement or gifted programs away from their age cohorts and peers. It means immersing them in what Fordham calls the "fictive kinship system" or "collective ethos" of the Black community. As Fordham suggests, this means combining the desire of Black students to be academically successful and their ethnic and/or racial identity. It also means beginning academic instruction with students' own cultural predisposition to idealize the collective ethos within the Black community and structuring the school curriculum and academic learning in ways which make them feel responsible for each other rather than being engaged in one-to-one competition. What she basically argues is that a growing number of Black students in the United States are in some form becoming raceless, being located in the position of racelessness. To understand what Fordham means by racelessness, we have to understand what she means by a fictive kinship system among blacks. It is a kinship system not related by blood or marriage, but by a people who have some reciprocal social or economic relationship, a kind of collective ethos which shapes the way which black people structure and define the relationship to one another. In examining the expressive dimension of the relationship between the dominant culture and the indigenous culture of Black Americans, Fordham discovers what she considers two important factors which are implicated in the unique texture of Black-White relationships in the United States: What she calls an "oppositional collective or social identity" and the oppositional cultural frame of reference. Black students struggle against unacceptable options--denying their emerging peoplehood by suppressing issues of identity or, as Fordham puts it, camouflaging their desire to be academically successful by pretending not to be doing well in school or putting forth the effort necessary to retain their identity as Black Americans. Fordham describes the fictive kinship system among Blacks as a kinship system not related by blood or marriage by among people who have some reciprocal social or economic relationship--a type of collective ethos which structures the way in which Black people define their relationship to one another. The kind of social interaction characteristic of this fictive kinship relationship which exists among the Black population in general within the United States is what Fordham, citing Williams, describes as a preference for depth over breadth, an interest in rich, vivid, personal, concrete, tangled detail in which human interactions are replete with repetition and density, and the mining of situations from many facets and angles--characteristics which Fordham maintains sharply contrast with what is expected of students in the Anglo school context where there exists a strong separation of the personal and non-personal and an ethos of individualism, greater attention to breadth than depth, competition rather than cooperation, and noninvolvement rather than deep, tangled engagements.

Schools, maintains Fordham, reward behaviors and an interaction style which are the inverse of the indigenous cultural patterns of Black students. Fordham assigns the term "racelessness" to the predicament of those students who minimize their connection to the fictive kinship system or oppositional cultural frames adopted by resistant Black groups. In this context, she attacks homogeneously structured classes which separate Blacks from tutelage from their peers and those who are racially similar. This suggests, in Fordham's view, that academically strong Black adoles-

cents come to believe that in intellectual and nonintellectual ways they are different from other Blacks and, except for phenotypical features, little more than clones of their white peers. Fordham writes that "Separating Black adolescents and other nondominant group children--both spatially and psychologically--from their peers and other members of their communities regardless of its benign intentions, appears to exacerbate the conflict such students experience around academic achievement and school success. This appears to be especially traumatic for Black students born and/or schooled during or immediately following the Civil Rights movement. According to Fordham, peer-proofing in the traditional sense is "internally disconcerting, forcing Black students to question the value of their racial identity and leading them to question the value of what they were doing and being asked to do even though they continued to do it."

Fordham ends her research by examining the work of Uri Treisman, who helped develop a group-centered approach to learning at the University of California at Berkeley. The success of this program, in Fordham's view, is due to its focus on strength of the students rather than remediation of their apparent weakness. Success is dependent upon their willingness to collaborate with each other. When this approach was utilized at UCB, Treisman reports that Black student participants outperformed a similar group of Asian students.

Schools teach Black students that working in isolation is the way to make it, and most internalize and distort the peer-proofing messages supported by their high school teachers and other school officials. This leads to an unwillingness, Fordham claims, to seek support from white peers whom they often do not trust, or their Black peers, with whom they socialize with but with whom they do not study. Fordham maintains--and I agree with her--that traditional measures of peer-proofing Black adolescents' school performance have largely been unsuccessful because in seeking to peer-proof the child to fit into the culturally different world of the larger society, school people tend to make the student a misfit in both contexts.

Now let me turn to another study in that same volume edited by Christie Sleeter. She and Carl Grant argue that there is a bi-fircation between school knowledge and real-life knowledge, with the potency of real life contrasting dramatically with the lifelessness of such school knowledge. Students who are disabled by their school experience do not experience a congruence between school knowledge and knowledge they bring to school with them. They cite Everhart's distinction between reified knowledge and regenerative knowledge. Regenerative knowledge is "created, maintained, and re-created through the continuous interaction of people in a community setting;" it is contextually based, meaning that understanding comes out of the specific historical context in which students are immersed. It is forged in the home and community. Regenerative knowledge asserts creative control over the knowledge production process. Reified knowledge, on the other hand, is that which, while abstract, is treated by students as if it were concrete and real. Like regenerative knowledge, it is created in a given historical context but is encoded for transmission and therefore remains decontextualized and static. Sleeter and Grant's study in a working-class neighborhood supports the idea that students have little ownership or control over public institutions and public learning, and hence, regenerative knowledge. While they have power to create, manipulate, and understand life, that power is usually restricted to their own localized neighborhood or peer group. They write that the students' "own cultural knowledge did not simply compete with school knowledge--school knowledge was subsumed within it, and understood as a set of tasks to do." School knowledge was not absorbed by students as a conceptual system for helping them understand and act on the world--it was compartmentalized within their own conceptual system and thought of as sets of activities done for someone else in a particular social context. The cultural knowledge possessed by students was rooted in their own concrete experiences and was divided into

those events which were controlled personally by the students and those which were controlled by adults. Sleeter and Grant articulate their challenge to teachers as one which calls teachers to connect public knowledge with the knowledge and meanings students bring with them. No matter who the students are, their power to learn and act begins with knowledge generated within their own lived experience. What Sletter and Grant advocate is "bridging school knowledge or public knowledge, and student's own cultural knowledge, and thus encourage students to analyze this interaction, and then use the knowledge learned to take charge of their lives."

These examples by Moll, Fordham, Sletter, and Grant reveal the importance of understanding knowledge and meaning as social, historical, and cultural constructions. A critical pedagogy is one in which the personal is always understood as social, and the social is always historicized to reveal how subjectivity has been produced in particular and select ways through interests of gender, race, and class as well as other interests. We must not simply speak of knowledge but *knowledge*, since all knowledge is relational and can only be understood within the context of its production, its distribution and the way it is taken up or consumed by different individuals and groups. The idea I want to stress here is that knowledges are invariably mutable, contingent, and partial; furthermore, their authority is always provisional as distinct from transcendental. Knowledges may, in fact, possess the power of truth but in reality they are historically contingent rather than inscribed by natural law; they emerge, in other words, out of social conventions and sometimes in opposition to the same.

A pedagogy of liberation works by rooting itself in the imagination of the oppressed, by speaking directly to their experiences. Individual subjectivity is constantly traversed by contradiction; its positioning within the cultural field is always relational, as subjects enter the struggle over subjectivity from different historically-given levels of material, cultural and social endowments. Our formation as individual subjects is therefore understood as not the product of mere chance--some arbitrary collision of significations, events, and random meanings--but rather as a field of relations forged within a grid of power, ethics, and meaning.

Let me be clear. I believe that the primary referent for the liberation of oppressed groups should not be the extent of their moral, ethnic, gender, or political strangeness or displacement outside the boundaries of the dominant and familiar but rather the establishment of criteria which can distinguish claims of moral, ethnic, gender, or political superiority which we exercise as outsiders. I believe along the Milhevic that the other has a hermeneutical privilege in naming the issues before them and in developing an analysis of their situation appropriate to the lived context in which they are situated. How we experience and place labels on our sense of reality are the primary referents for constructing a critical pedagogy.

When Nietzsche talked about going "beyond good and evil" he wasn't referring to an escape from a world unsullied by ideological interest or the binary oppositions which plague the grand narratives of the Western metaphysical tradition. Rather, as philosopher and theologian Cornell West has pointed out, he was seeking new distinctions and categories of good and evil which would enable the creation of new subjectivities, new social spaces, new communities. We need to follow Nietzsche and Marx at least this far, and we may surprise ourselves with how much closer to a deepening of democracy we can achieve. We don't need to sow future priests of deconstruction in the desacralized horizon on the postmodern scene. Rather, we need to transform present social practices and relations because history compels us to do so, because the present historical juncture in which we witness so much human misery and suffering, necessitates it. History compels us because our subjectivities are forged in it; it is where the furnace of our will lies buried, igniting both dreams and desires. For in the iron womb of history we cast the shape of our longings; and to reclaim history is to be fully present in its making.

We need to do more than to redescribe ourselves in new ways--although the way we seek to imagine ourselves is an important step in the struggle for liberation--we need most pressingly to both reform and transform our present ways of contesting the capitalist modes of production, with all of their attendant forms of social mystification, technologies, and hydra-headed bureaucratic networks. We need to outface the barrenness of postmodern culture by employing a discourse and set of social practices that will not be content with resurrecting a past which can never be reclaimed, or with redescribing the present by simply textualizing it, leaving in place its malignant hierarchies of power and privilege. For these latter acts only stipulate the lineage of and give sustenance to those social relations responsible for the very injustice one is trying to struggle against. We need to stare into history's grim visage and assume our narrative space within the very contours of its flesh, a space where we can speak our own stories and dream our own dreams without the dead letter of burgees ethics weighing like a nightmare on minds still capable of envisioning, still willing to hope, still intent upon constructing a space of difference, a space of possibility. That space does not wait for us, beckoning us to occupy it, or thinking that we will one day stumble into it. There is no act of grace suddenly bestowing the path for us. We require an ultimacy of commitment, an unbending intent, a continually renewed effort to brush reality against the grain. It is a space that must be fought for and defended, terrain where hope will remain forever the enemy of despair.

Learning in the Social Environment: A Crow Perspective

Janine Pease-Windy Boy

The thoughts I would like to share with you today are some of the ways in which we have composed, constructed, designed, and created at our own tribal college. It is a bringing together of the ideas from adult and higher learning, and it is one constructed within the confines of the Crow Reservation as chartered by the Tribal Council of the Crow Tribe. It was designed and created over a period of about 20 years with the good wishes of elders who had an idea about our own scholarship, our own interest, and our destiny.

When we consider the idea of the work we needed to do to get along in society today as Crow Indian People, we start from the very beginning of where we are in the universe. Our culture commission met for many, many hours back in 1962 to talk about the way in which learning had come about with people in our tribe. In 1962 I was still in high school, but in 1975 I joined that force--that heritage of planning in hope. From the nearest I can tell from the heritage I have, it started from the place where the human being is in the universe. That is that the Creator is amongst everyone; elements are in friends and in nature whether it is the rocks, the rivers, the birds, or the animals, and it certainly is felt by human beings, the sky, the stars, and the whisper of the wind. A Creator could vest in the person knowledge--knowledge in any number of things. Knowledge can come from spending time in prayer and fasting, from the top of a mountain or the river bottoms, or from a small spirit.

One of our greatest wisdoms in the Crow Tribe is from the chickadee, the smallest bird in our environment. The chickadee is the major lesson of protection to the Crows. We are a small tribe. We were always at odds with the Sioux; there were thousands of them. The Blackfeet were to the north, and the Shoshone and Arapaho were to the south. Lots of tribes did not like us, and we did not like them. Defensively, that little bird taught us when to observe and listen. It was the finest tool we could possibly acquire--medicine and knowledge.

One woman that we have heard from had a very important message from a tiny creature--an ant. In her tepee, one little ant crawled in and gave her an extremely important message that did in fact save all her loved ones around her.

When we looked at where our knowledge came from, we knew that all of our knowledge emanated from the Creator whether it was from messages from our environment or from each other. The Creator had told us that we needed to be a part of a family, and our family ways and our family ties were expressions of the Creator's love and regard and respect for us. As Crows, we have a clan system that follows the mother's heritage line. For everything we do and for every achievement or moment of success, we have a recognition ceremony; that is, we bring in the clan's people to celebrate along with us. For the achievement, we do not receive gifts; we give gifts to those people who have prayed with us all along.

That same spirituality comes about in the frame of our language. In the language we find no possessives; that is, the world is not divided up and owned by anyone. It is a society and a community that has been created and vested with life and breath. There are no coercive verbs such as *you have to, you must, you should,* or *you ought to.* All of these things do not exist in our frame of language. There are myriads of kinship terms to describe relationships, such as those for very close relationships in which first cousins say whatever they think in terms of first-line criticism or in which an uncle corrects and disciplines. Also we find there is no simple past! The past is so real that it is always with us and is present. We love life. Those were some of the things that we looked at as the base of our assumptions as we began to deal with the relationship with our learning en-

vironment.

We are sort of one of those back water societies where if we don't care, nobody else cares. For 100 or so years, we just had no one going to college or the formal sort of learning that many in the United States enjoyed. As recently as 1970, we had only 30 of our adult members with college degrees of any sort. In 10 years from 1970 to 1980, we increased our numbers to 200, and that was when the big investment of the federal money assisted a lot of us to get there. Then things dropped down to the bottom, and absolutely nothing happened after 1970. So we really had to make a decision.

What was it that we wanted? We chartered a college, but we got there by way of tutoring each other in voluntary places like kitchens on wintery nights. The idea grew that we could in fact do this on our own; we did not accept the assumption that we had to import teachers from someplace else. Because of our understanding that knowledge was vested in all of us throughout the community, we knew this, and we agreed with the Creator and his greeting on us. We not only had mentoring systems in our society, but people were mentors in one field and learners in another. Even in my children's life time, this is so in education. We inherited all these ways in which knowledge could be learned whether it is through observation, from listening, from mentoring, or through very, very meticulous study. We inherited a faith in our own scholarship and in the idea of education.

So we began to look at how this would be placed together. We were convinced we didn't have to have a building even though people said there is where it would be. We didn't have a building until our sixth year of operation. Even then the building that we had was called submarginal, and lots of people called it a dump. We knew that if we were not in this building, we would be some place else. Some people still look at our college and see at it that way. When we moved there, we pulled together about 60 volunteers; we washed, we scrubbed, and we knew that it was a place to be together and do some learning.

We also knew that since knowledge came from the Creator, we didn't have to pay for it. We wanted very much to provide those classes, those places of learning, at no cost. We started out with the assumption that our classes could be free to our students--our commitment was so complete. The first time we had an accreditation review (and we are a college striving for accreditation), we were told that students would not value what they did not pay for.

We found how deeply rooted our cultural sense was in terms of where knowledge comes from and how this differs from someone else's assumption that somehow knowledge can be boxed, packaged, and weighed or that it equals a certain dollar value in the eyes of a student. Being in this back part of the United States, we never have had a history of wage labor. We work hard in our lives. We care for our families, but we almost always have 50 to 80 percent unemployment. The knowledge we acquire is the living of life and living it as well as we possibly can. It may be but mostly isn't related to our credit ability.

So as an institution, we have had to recognize those knowledges that we want to convey to each other. We went to our elders at a tribal meeting with a long list of those things that they recognize as elements of our scholarship--the science of our kinship, the science of our relationship, the science of our politics, the science of our philosophy and our psychology, and the science of our sociology. They knew this. These are not people who have formal degrees, but they have eminent scholarship. As people who were assigned to understand what we were putting together, we determined we would have the largest department in our college called Crow Studies and have it based on that eminent community scholarship. If you look at our catalog today, you will find 35 classes in Crow Studies. It is an interdisciplinary kind of study area. It is our knowledge, and it is not taught anywhere in this universe except at Little Big Horn College. That took a tremendous level of commitment because when you try to sell American Indian literature or the oral literature that has never been written down but only spoken in the most respectful terms to somebody who

comes through to accredit your institution for literature in the finest sense, such people say, "Where is your English literature? Where is your Russian literature?" I say, "They teach that at Montana State University. Our students can go there and get it and have a fine version of whatever is Russian literature. Here we study Crow Indian literature."

There are seasons for knowledge. There are seasons when certain classes can be taught. Oral literature for instance is one of them. Our elderly people know that and respect those stories. But they told them only in winter time and when food was served--usually in the evening when it was cold and snow was blowing around. They are told in such a fashion that all attention is on them. And we do that. Every class time we have our kettle of berry pudding and fried bread, and we sit down with a variety of our scholars, our students, and study again in this wonderful way--a way in which it has been all along.

Another aspect that we looked at was the oddity that the Creator gave us many chances to acquire knowledge; not just one, not two, not ten, but as many through our life time as we wish. We wanted to have a mechanism for students to have not one, not two, or not five tries but to have as many tries as they wish. Now you know there are admission standards; if you fail the first quarter, you are on probation, and if you fail the second quarter, you are suspended. Our regulations do not follow that. We even went so far as to eliminate the *F* because we felt that no one had to bear the burden of failure. We were close enough to our students to understand negating factors but also the element of compassion. Knowledge can be acquired, and there are many mitigating factors. We can have the compassion as educators to give our students a number of tries.

Time packaging was another concern. How do you bundle knowledge into time? In some classes our students were ready to handle the regular quarter system, but in others they wanted to take more time--time for discussing, lots of time. Time is a funny puzzling thing, and it is amazing to me how often we constrain ourselves to time in lots of different minutes; an hour, an hour and a half, two hours and that is it--we are done. Our students and people really felt that we needed to look at different sorts of time packaging.

At Little Big Horn College, we also recognize the achievement of our students. We wanted very much to have achievement noted in ways as among their families. Our graduation ceremony, for instance, is the recognition ceremony of the returning warriors, and we have our warrior singers who sing along with the teachers and faculty. In the midst of the ceremony, we bring in clan representatives to pray for our graduates in their success.

Our school basketball team won the national championship among 22 tribal colleges. When they came back, we decided to tap into a mechanism in our community that had been there traditionally; that was the return of the warrior ceremony. This ceremony is one in which a young warrior is paired with 12 community members. There is knowledge in each of the officers of the ceremony. The players go out into the community so we have to identify those 12 office holders in the ceremony. We bring the parents and the players out to the home of this office holder. Planning for this takes about two months. There are dances, there are lessons, there are prayers, and each office is different. Our players were able to acquire this knowledge and to take part in that ceremony. The evening that we had it, we must have had 600 of our community members come to observe the tremendous community solidarity that stood out in our success. We were so excited about this mechanism, this way of conveying unity and historical roles, that we wrote it up in our accreditation study. It just looked like a circus to them! But to us, it was one of the most solid things we ever did to tie to our history, to our recognition system, and to the way in which there is learning from each other intergenerationally.

We also believe strongly in political participation. If Crows can do anything besides basketball, we love our politics. We enjoy meeting and participating. In our tribal elections, we often have 85% participation. In the last 10 years, the college has been extremely

involved in voter participation. We have registration drives; we have educational forums; we have brought enemies together in forums where Republicans and Democrats come to present their platforms. We have even had some of the white candidates come down and talk with the Indians. There are many things that we do to show our belief that our people have citizenship, and that has not been easy for us. We have been accused of many things and have been investigated. I myself have been investigated by the FBI on all kinds of accounts. Of course, I am here today, and I have not spent any time before a judge.

What we are doing is investing our scholarship in ourselves and that really upsets some people. We have learned from our experiences. One thing we learned about our cultural commitments is that there are things that really are our expressions, our scholarship, and our learning. We are discovering more about that everyday. Three of our classes are instructed in the Crow language by professors who have masters degrees, and some working on doctoral degrees, like myself, do instruct in that language.

The biggest test has been the scrutiny of those from mainstream society who have a standard model in mind of what the community college ought to be. Our board of trustees are 12 Crow Indians who have been elected from among people interested in education. We have gathered together on a hilltop isolating ourselves for about 12 hours to decide on our curriculum. When the day was over, we looked over the Big Horn River, one of the most holy places in our land. It was a tough decision to make that sort of commitment. Some people cried; I know I did. But we also knew that many options were in front of us. The scrutiny which we have been put to made us realize our commitment. I was told by visitors that because I accepted a really low salary, I was not worth a whole lot. I was also told things by visiting evaluators such as "minority groups are awfully good with their hands." Now you might find this a surprising statement in 1986 by a person who held our destiny in her hands; she took us so lightly! Academic pride is our business. The way we feel is that we do what we want to do. Then they suggest that we need off-reservation advisors because we really are not aware of what we want to do! My biggest challenge in life is to contain my ferocious anger. Dr. Tietz, the president of this university and a person I admire greatly, once told me, "Write it out four times. You will then begin to take out the anger and to speak in a language they can understand." I can't tell you what a struggle it has been, except to say that we are surviving. I guess we must be finding some language to communicate what it is that we have accomplished.

Our colleges are struggling. There are six other tribal colleges in Montana, and I am proud to see some of my colleagues and fellow graduate students here because they shine. The story I told has been experienced at Blackfoot Community College, at Salish Kootenai College which is our senior institution in the state of Montana, at Dull Knife College on the Northern Cheyenne reservation, at Stone Child to the north, and at Fork Peck and Fort Belknap. The State Commission on Higher Education was not very interested in us; this year we met with them for the first time in our 20 year history. These are moments in history. Building or no building, we are going to be around educating our people in our way rather than just sitting around.

From an Adult Educator's Perspective

Lloyd Korhonen
Chere Coggins Gibson

Lloyd Korhonen and Chere Coggins Gibson served as members of a reaction panel for presentations made by Peter McLaren, and Janine Pease-Windy Boy.

Korhonen's Comments

We have a very wise philosopher in Oklahoma who once said, "It wasn't what I didn't know that done me in. It was what I was so certain about that was wrong." Many times I think we in education become so certain of what we know that this certainty comes out as truth. I am reminded of that when I listen to what is truth, to how truth is understood, and to why it makes sense. So the first observation and reaction I had is this: it is not so much what I didn't know that done me in; it is what I am so certain about that is probably wrong.

My second reaction grows out of a whole series of impressions I have had over life that were reinforced by the stories today. A number of years ago, Pat Mullens and I used to collect folklore among Indian tribes and Mexican American people. I'll relate one story out of that experience and draw my reaction from it. As we were trying to collect what people understood in life, we described things in stories to people, and they described things to us. We were talking about rocks, but the words they were using for rocks were words used for animate objects. We tried to explain to them that rocks were not alive. At this point an older gentleman asked us if we were sure. You know, I really wasn't! I have that reaction now as I listen to the stories that I have heard.

A third reaction is we have attempted to create a science out of what we do in education and learning. It all goes back to an earlier canon. There is a word we use with great frequency in our study of learning, and that is psychology. I was thinking of the root word--psyche. Most people translate psychology as the mind or the study of the mind. But you can go back to the earliest canons where psyche actually means soul. It doesn't mean soul in the Christian sense of an immortal soul, but rather it means all of you, all that is you. It is the essence of what a person is. I think what we have created is education without a soul, without an understanding.

My fourth reaction is something that should give us some pause. We have done a very poor job, or no job at all, of separating out credentialing from learning. That I pose to you as our problem, our problem as academics. We have done a very poor job in the world of education of pointing out that education and learning are not necessarily schooling and credentialing. That is something we all know, but evidently we have done a poor job of conveying it.

Those are my four reactions. One hopefully spiritual enough, two hopefully reflective enough, and the last one hopefully directional enough that we might have something to talk about.

Gibson's Comments

When you are asked to be a reactor, you do one of three things. You can get fully prepared, that is read a lot of good books and think things through. In the second tactic, you take voluminous notes, which I do anyway. Or, one can just sort of react. I think I will just react and give you a sense of the things that I wrote down as others spoke.

The thing that strikes me first and foremost is the degree of emotionality that is behind the stories we have heard here today. Any of you who have done community problem solving and research in the area know that you get very caught up in people's stories and people's victories. It is a very special arena to work in.

One of the things that I wrote down was "change as norm." Many of us have grown up thinking that stability is what we aim for. I think what we need to help people understand is that change is what we aim for. Change is

built on an examination of the past and a sense of where we want to go in the future. We need to instill that in ourselves, our students, our children, and those around us.

Another point and one that Lloyd alluded to is that it is so frustrating that when we say education, people automatically tie it to something formalized and institutionalized. Thus, they devalue their own experience and their reflection on their experience. Also, others name our roles for us if we allow that to happen. How important it is to be able to tell your own story and once you are able to tell your own story, to be able to reflect on it, to examine it, or to interpret it. I found this in doing some research on community problem solving. When you asked people to reflect on what they had done as they intervened on their own behalf and to recall the action they had taken, that kind of reflection allowed them to reaffirm their value and to reaffirm that they really had learned and that they had made a difference. I think that is an arena that adult educators have failed to do enough work in many ways. We have not worked enough in the whole realm of community problem solving, social action, and working with those who have made such a difference. As adult educators we have played in safer arenas, and in some ways have cheated ourselves and others of some valuable learning experiences. One of our speakers spoke of those who call this another type of education; a type of education that is important because their lives depend on it. And it really isn't another kind of learning! We know that. We need to help people understand that community problem solving is an educational experience that results in learning.

When I listened to Janine, I heard her say again that knowledge comes from variety of sources through a variety of experiences. We learn from the smallest, the chickadee for example. We do learn from the smallest, from our children for example, and we learn from those smallest experiences. But again, we can't do that unless we take the time to reflect on our experience, to examine that experience, to interpret that experience, and to reaffirm the importance of our experience. But we hustle along so quickly we don't take that time, and we don't help our students take that time.

As I look at the words I wrote down--power, powerful, empowerment, and value--there is an awful lot of power in the people, but sometimes we fail to help people recognize the power in themselves. We must help ourselves and others acquire a questioning attitude, a problem-posing attitude at all times. So often we look for solutions. We need to be looking at the problems and posing problems, reflecting and reacting, and learning and growing all the while.

The Arch of Social Dreaming: Teaching Radical Pedagogy Under the Sign of Postmodernity

Peter McLaren

Let me share with you this morning, if I may, some thinking I have done related to what I sometimes refer to as "the arch of social dreaming." Yesterday, I tried to share with you some perspectives on social context and some of the aims and objectives of educators working with the critical educational tradition. I was highlighting perspectives which could be labelled as post-structuralist, and yet these perspectives are shared among only a small number of theorists who work within the critical educational tradition, a comment which is in no way meant to denigrate the political economy approach which characterizes the majority of critical educational work. Both approaches make a transgressive commitment to challenging existing institutional and social apparatuses of domination and oppression, in giving voice to the unsaid, in heeding the unacknowledged power relations sealed into the structured silences of state bureaucracies and sovereign regimes of truth. The post-structuralist position, however, is better able to highlight the historically and culturally specific functions of discourses in maintaining social arrangements of power and privilege. This perspective is able to insist that theories of schooling acknowledge their status as *discourse* and that theorists be able to narrate the contingencies of the formulations from which they work. Similarly, teachers and students are encouraged to use some of the insights from the critical tradition to be able to analyze how knowledge reflects prevailing social arrangements, and how knowledge and experience are never unmediated but always politically interested. Critical educators were portrayed as engaged in the act of denaturalizing the social and articulating the process of schooling as a form of discursive production, as the production of not only school subjects but also subjectivities. Further, they were unable to uncover the ways in which schooling represents itself as shrouded in an illusion of necessity and permanence. It accomplishes this through rituals of the ordinary and the mundane, by smoothing over and dehistoricizing and defusing fractious antagonisms related to relations of class, gender, and ethnicity. Social life and classroom life were similarly articulated as constituted by discourses which structure and delimit the practice of the possible by providing not only constricting internalized norms of intelligibility to social and institutional life but also rituals which order social life and provide students and teachers with ways of embodying normative modes of subjectivity. Let me now expand on some of these points I presented to you yesterday.

One principle which I take as more or less definitive in constructing an arch of social dreaming is that teachers need to draw on the cultural resources which students bring to class in order to understand the categories that those students use to construct their own meaning, their own reality, their own location in history. Students need to acquire forms of knowledge, meaning, and literacy which not only challenge the discourses of the dominant culture but also enable students to appropriate the codes and vocabularies of different cultural discourses so that they can possess the critical skills necessary to shape and transform rather than merely confirm the existing social order. Adopting what some teachers call a "balanced" pedagogical approach, one which veers neither right nor left is, in effect, to perfect and help increase the resilience of forms of domination.

Constructing an arch of social dreaming means developing a politics of difference which actively contests the devaluation of those whom we have relegated as the "Other." The discourse of many mainstream approaches to pedagogy recursively constitutes itself through cultural fictions of the marginal, the deviant, the immiserated, the disaffected, and the underclass. In complying with such a discourse, we may be insinuating our

pedagogies into the hostile displacement of minorities which celebrates as the privileged point of reference of the so-called cultural evolution of the white, Anglo-Saxon male. In the United States, there seems to be a tendency of equating difference with deviancy, so that the marginalized "other" (e.g., women, minority groups) become the baleful barbarian. My second point is that educators need to take a more critical and political role in defining the nature of their own work and the ethical direction of their own labor, a point which is strongly emphasized in the work of Henry Giroux. A third and closely related point is that students deserve the opportunity to question from a critical vantage point their own history and their own voices. This means that educators must develop a pedagogical language that can question issues of public policy and redress social injustices, a voice capable of dismantling the tyranny of the present with the hope of bringing into existence what is yet to be. My colleague, Henry Giroux, suggests that educators can begin to build for a better future by recognizing that knowledge is neither neutral or objective, and instead is socially manufactured and produced and necessarily embodies particular interests and certain selective assumptions. Knowledge, if it is to serve a socially transformative function, must be linked to the concept of power. This, of course, suggests that educators must raise questions about its truth claims as well as the interests which such knowledge serves. Giroux maintains that knowledge defined as such does not become valuable because it is legitimized by curriculum experts, or adult education experts, but because it is directly linked to the power it has as a vehicle of and platform for critique, as a means of social transformation and a medium of self and social empowerment. So in the terms set forth by Giroux, knowledge becomes important to the degree that it is able to assist individuals to understand not only the assumptions embedded in particular archival forms based on content, but also the processes whereby knowledge is produced, appropriated, and transformed within specific social, cultural, and historical settings. Thus, as I see it, one essential question for building an arch of social dreaming for adult education is to ask how we, as educators, can better unravel and better comprehend those lived antagonistic relations that characterize school cultures, and how we can better enable students, particularly those students from subordinate classes and groups, to transform the dominant school culture in the interests of a more just society. At the same time, teachers need to raise the issue of how it is that the dominant culture is able to function in such a way that students are often rendered voiceless and powerless. The answer to these questions lies, at least in part, in putting the myths and the injustices at the very center of the dominant discourses of teaching and learning "under erasure" (to coin a popular term within literary deconstruction) and in building a critical mode of teaching that refuses to suppress students' histories, that refuses to deny them their claim to subjecthood. Henry Giroux takes this idea a step further by urging educators to engage a vision of community in which students voices define themselves in terms of a distinct social formation and their broader collective hopes.

Another point which I would like to emphasize in discussing the construction of an arch of social dreaming for adult educators is recognizing that, as teachers, we can never speak exclusively for the "other," although we may align ourselves with the "other" with respect to issues of social struggle and justice. While we must abandon the retrograde and violent notion that as white, Western educators, we are in a position to define reality for others, we can--and should--work with diverse others to deepen their and our understanding of the complexity and transformative potential of the traditions, histories, and funds of knowledge which exist in both the school and the surrounding community. And I would also suggest that not only should we acknowledge in the school curriculum and in the practice of pedagogical possibility the diverse voices, experiences, histories and community traditions which increasingly characterize urban schooling, but we should also be able to respect the specificity of difference while at the same time articulate "differences"

within a politics of solidarity and liberation in which dreams are given birth and realized through the development of communities of trust and affirmation. We need to develop a social/critical utopian praxis which calls for our unconditional withdrawal from inhumanity and for our movement towards what Agnes Heller calls a "common good." That is, towards a *praxis* which promotes the goodness of persons who prefer to suffer wrong than to commit wrong.

In achieving a common good--and we should recognize that there is never only *one* common good--educators need to further develop a language of hope which together will allow the oppressed to speak outside the terms and frames of reference provided by the colonizer, whether this be the teacher, the researcher, the administrator, or public servant. Educators also need a language of analysis and hope which permits women to speak in words outside of "name of the Father vocabularies" and which does not deny excluded minorities from speaking their narratives of liberation and desire.

Several questions come to mind with respect to further giving shape to the arch of social dreaming. What are the moral, ethical, political, and cultural variants against which we should construct ourselves as social agents of historical change? If we recognize pedagogy and learning as forms of cultural politics, then what are the ways in which educators unconsciously silence and exclude those different voices from dialogue? Here we need to make a distinction between dialogue and conversation. I see a conversation as referring to taking turns while speaking to a variety of common themes. The concept of dialogue, however, suggests to me a dynamic and dialectical process in which assumptions are uncovered which inform the way each participant articulates his or her specific view of reality. To participate in a dialogue with significant others is, in my way of reasoning, being attentive to the deep structure, the rhetorical tropes, the relations of power, and the gender and class-specific constructions of what we are conveying to one another. This is why I detest the popular metaphor of democracy as simply one big conversation where everyone gets his or her turn to speak and, as Andy Warhol once noted, where it is possible to be famous for twenty minutes. I believe, in contradistinction to this, that democracy needs to be modelled on critical dialogue where while every voice is heard and acknowledged, every voice is also equally rendered problematic. We need to challenge those voices that preach hatred, sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, and religious intolerance, that speak the name of truth in the interests of dominating--not liberating--others. So the *praxis* which I have been referring to over these two days is a *praxis* which is lived in solidarity with all groups struggling to overcome suffering and alienation. The *praxis* of solidarity which I am advocating is one which seeks to engage and not simply recover history. It is one which confronts history critically so as to assist the powerless in locating themselves in it. We need to situate the challenge of adult education as a task of empowering the powerless from states of dependency to conditions of autonomy as both an informed movement for revolutionary social and economic transformation, and as a means of achieving a state of reflexive or critical consciousness. This is what Freire, Giroux, and others have been arguing for the last decade. For instance, we need to recognize our complicity as teachers in the process of constituting our own subjectivity against that of the "other," who becomes, in reality, a creature of our own struggle for power. This may seem utopian in the categorical sense, but I want to emphasize that I am being utopian in a *provisional* sense. I am not imposing any blueprints here except to argue that we need to develop a *praxis* of liberation in which people are able to distinguish genuine needs from the corporate manipulation of their desires, and in which they have the power and autonomy to determine rationally and freely the nature and direction of their desire, both individually and collectively. In achieving such a praxis, social theorists and educators alike need to free themselves from what Renato Roksaldo calls "imperialist nostalgia," which refers to a longing for the very forms of social

life which have been altered or destroyed, often in the process of conducting research, a longing for the passing of what they, themselves, have transformed through their supposed "civilizing" mission. We need, also, to remember that the objects of our social analysis and our pedagogies are not just vacant and waiting receptacles to be penetrated by and filled with our wisdom--a rather violent and phallocentric image with which to construct the basis of a pedagogy--but rather analyzing subjects--organic intellectuals--whose perceptions must be taken as seriously as we take our own.

Let me refer briefly to the concept of desire which I have been employing here during the seminar. What has been occupying my interest for the past year has been the concept of desire and the process by which ideology is grafted into and mobilized by the flesh. Ideology, in this sense, isn't something that is simply lived through some form of rational consensus but is, in fact, something that is lived in and through the body. If we want to understand the concept of ideology, particularly as it relates to Gramsci's articulation of hegemony, then we need to ask ourselves what makes us consent to various forms of domination. How does the dominant culture encourage this to happen? What makes being oppressors comfortable and perhaps even pleasurable? How is it that we can watch a music video, for instance, and try to encourage students to critically analyze the production and reception of media discourses, to ideologically contest the militarism, the sexism, the violence of these television videos, yet simultaneously enjoy those very cultural forms we are pronouncing as oppressive since somehow our bodies--pleasure's bodies make a connection with the music. On the one hand, it gives us visceral pleasure to feel the rhythm in our bodies and we make an investment in that pleasure with our bodies; yet on the other hand we abhor the ideological implications and ramifications of witnessing the objectification of women, the militaristic/fascist representations, etc. Ideology is positioning us in this case through the mobilization of affect, as Lawrence Grossberg has argued.

Needs presuppose the possibility of fulfillment whereas desire seems to suggest an endless deferral of fulfillment and in this way, desire becomes its own object. Madan Sarup talks about the "desire for desire." Desire is what cannot be specified by demand, and emerges when satisfaction of need cannot be met. Desire is never free-floating but is always produced in historical and culturally-specific ways. Do we have any control over the direction of our desiring, and has capitalist society confused desire with real need? How is the construction of desire within late capitalism linked to the instrumental rationality, the Eurocentricity, the patriarchal discourses of modernity and postmodernity?

Desires which students express in school cannot be understood outside the manner in which they become institutionalized and socially legitimated, without taking into account the ends and purposes for which these desires have become manufactured, both in relation to established educational discourses and in relation to economies of power and privilege in the larger society. The question that should, in my mind, arise here for educators is how have our wills and our sense of agency as teachers, and the wills and desires of our students, become colonized by modes of economic and symbolic production within the larger society? This amounts to saying that desires are always mobilized by the contingency of the social, and its particular discourse of power, which are often tied to the economic requirements and dominant modes of material and cultural production. Within capitalism, modes of desire are invariably linked in some way to the production of some form of surplus labor and consumption.

Grossberg has revealed the manner in which attitudes and moods are organized in historically specific ways (e.g., such as Gramsci's "optimism of the will") as economies of affect or impassioned ways of relating to the world. By itself, the production of mood is not ideologically charged but it articulates itself into ideological systems and specific conditions. Whereas libidinal needs can be satisfied, at least partially satisfied, moods are never satisfied, only realized, and constitute the investments and commitments

made by individuals to the empowerment of difference. And, as Grossberg notes, what matters most in the age of postmodernity is that *something specific and different matters*. It doesn't matter what matters, as long as the mattering is intense and significant in itself. Structures of power are able to articulate themselves through this mobilization of affect. Let me give you an example of what I mean. My friend and colleague, John Novak of Brock University in Canada, attended a principal's conference in the Eastern United States last year. He was a featured speaker along with another speaker of an entirely different ideological and pedagogical cast--principal Joe Clark (of the movie *Lean On Me* fame). Clark had been featured on the cover of *Time Magazine* with his baseball bat which he carried on patrol through his New Jersey high school to ward off the so-called "thugs" who were causing trouble. I'm sure most of you here have heard of Mr. Clark and suffice it to say that John Novak works from a much more liberal pedagogical and political orientation than does Joe Clark, yet both speakers received standing ovations from the large audience in attendance. Novak wanted to find out why and interviewed a number of principals about why they had applauded Mr. Clark. Most individuals remarked that while they didn't like the values and ideology which informed Clark's leadership in his school, they admired his commitment and style. I think the same thing can be said about the popularity of Oliver North. What matters to many Americans is that something really matters to Joe Clark and to Oliver North, and I think it was North's impassioned style rather than his ideas that stole the show in the TV fanfare surrounding Contragate.

I want to shift gears here because time is running out and I feel I've jumped over a lot of areas, and I dare say I have not given sufficient attention to any one of them. So let me end on a final note which I hope will be of interest. I want to bring the theoretical import of what I have been saying to discuss the movie, *Dead Poet's Society*, starring Robin Williams. A lot of students have wanted to discuss this film in class, and it frightens me to think that the teacher played by Robin Williams is viewed as practicing what my students feel is critical pedagogy. When this film gets released as a video, I will no doubt use it in class because I think that a lot of teachers will miss the dangers inherent in the classroom approach used by Williams. For those that haven't seen the film, I just want to mention a bit about the pedagogy used by the central character who in the 1950's returns to a private, authoritarian ruling-class school for boys he once attended as a student. Compared to the dictatorial approach involving rote learning and severe military-style discipline which is used by most teachers, the classroom approach used by Williams is very innovative--you could call it liberal and not be wrong--and amounts to shattering mainstream conventions in the school. For instance, Williams has the class rip out pages of the rather grim text used to teach poetry, and has the students take turns at standing on his desk so that they can see the classroom from a different point of view. The students find Williams to be quite a refreshing teacher, if not liberating, and their curiosity about his history as a former student at the school leads them to discover that he once belonged to a secret club called the "Dead Poet's Society." Unbeknownst to Williams, some students decide to resurrect the club, which began meeting in a cave in the evenings and where members recited poetry, painted their faces, and played musical instruments. I won't spoil the movie for you by giving away the plot, but I trust you've got the general idea of the pedagogical approach used by the main character.

The problem that I have with this form of pedagogy is that it suggests that self-improvement and empowerment can exist without calling the existing social order into question. Issues of class, gender, and ethnic inequality are never raised. In fact, I would go so far as to claim that this form of liberal, humanist pedagogy serves to contain the political, to discursively police revolt, to equate liberation with the personal over the social, and to mask forms of domination. There's also a repugnant sexism that informs this pedagogy, illustrated in William's remark that poetry is simply a

device to "woo women." The students are conspicuously not invited to problematize the relationship among the authoritarianism in the school, the way power works in the larger society to silence certain groups, and its entanglements in social practices which serve the rich and powerful. In Jim Berlin's terms, this illustrates a form of "expressionist rhetoric" which, although it includes a denunciation of economic, political, and social pressures to conform--to resist the institutionally-sponsored production of desire, attitude, and behavior--it is resistance in the service of the privatized ego. As Berlin notes, expressionist rhetoric reinforces entrepreneurial virtues of individualism, private initiative, risk-taking, and subversion of authority. It is the ideology of the unique, private vision of a Donald Trump and devoid of a concern with how the material and social constraints prohibit other, less fortunate groups to realize their private visions. It is as if consciousness is somehow not connected to the workings of power, or as if hierarchies of power and privilege are natural hierarchies. While Williams as the teacher attempts to defamiliarize the experience which the students have of rote learning and blind obedience to adult authority and the ruling-class economies of power and privilege, and while he is intent, perhaps even insistent, on getting beyond the deformation of the individual as authorized by the discourses of tradition and the prevailing regimes of truth of the time, the end result is the struggle for the uniqueness--perhaps even eccentricity--of individual expression. Jim Berlin describes this kind of subversiveness as more apparent than real. It is debilitatingly divisive of political protest because it encourages individuals to achieve unique personhood in antiseptic isolation from any real sense of collective struggle around the referent of difference and otherness. It is a pedagogy which operates without consideration of how power works to privilege certain groups over others on the basis of race, class, and gender, and Williams takes no pains to narrate the contingency of his own and the students' race, class, and gender privilege. It is a soft mode of resistance easily co-opted by those forces it seeks to delegitimate; actually, it represents a form of resistance which actually compliments the capitalist ethos of possessive individualism. A critical pedagogy must attempt to de-authorize and rewrite the master narratives of liberal post-industrial democracy and the humanist, individualist, and patriarchal discourses which underwrite it while at the same time undermine and reconstruct the idealized and romantic conception of the subject which is structured by eurocentric and androcentric discursive power relations. In Terry Eagleton's terms, Williams's pedagogy is a form of moral technology which structures modes of desire that the society needs in the era of late capitalism. It teaches what he terms a "bourgeois mode of subjectivity" precisely in the way it celebrates learning for the sake of learning, which is a mistaken virtue I believe, because learning never speaks for itself and is always inscribed by political interests and supported by certain relations of power. Freedom and creativity are valued as ends in themselves in the discourse of liberal humanist pedagogy whereas the critical educator believes that freedom and creativity should be part of a larger pedagogical project, one that poses the crucial question for the students which is: Freedom and creativity for what?

Mas'ud Zavaradeh's critique of the liberal humanist classroom is, I think, very appropriately applied to the pedagogy of the *Dead Poet's Society*. The pedagogy employed is one of "fancy"--what Zavaradeh calls a "pedagogy of pleasure." Here liberation is personal and eminently historical and has little to do with emancipation. It is a pedagogy formally "at odds" with the "serious" workaday bourgeois world but doesn't seriously question the underlying assumptions or relations of power which inform it. Questions involving power/knowledge relations are suspended, and dangerous memories of human suffering and rebellion are never raised. I leave my students with the following questions in relation to the pedagogy represented in the film: What vision of the future inheres in the pedagogy of the *Dead Poet's Society*? What vision of social justice? What model of the individual subject?

What suppositions involving democracy?

I have raised the issue of the pedagogy employed in the *Dead Poet's Society* as a way to make concrete some of the theoretical propositions I have been discussing with you over the last several days.

Might I say in conclusion that I hope some of these ideas will provoke discussion over the remainder of the conference. I believe that the more we attempt to clarify what we mean by "critical pedagogy" the more opportunities will present themselves for discussing and elaborating the values, suppositions, and basis for practice which inform our teaching, learning, and research practices, and, perhaps most important of all, the vision of the future which inheres in them.